

The Bible, The Qur'an and Science
**The Holy Scriptures Examined In The Light Of Modern
Knowledge**

by

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Foreword

In his objective study of the texts, Maurice Bucaille clears away many preconceived ideas about the Old Testament, the Gospels and the Qur'an. He tries, in this collection of Writings, to separate what belongs to Revelation from what is the product of error or human interpretation. His study sheds new light on the Holy Scriptures. At the end of a gripping account, he places the Believer before a point of cardinal importance: the continuity of a Revelation emanating from the same God, with modes of expression that differ in the course of time. It leads us to meditate upon those factors which, in our day, should spiritually unite rather than divide-Jews, Christians and Muslims.

As a surgeon, Maurice Bucaille has often been in a situation where he was able to examine not only people's bodies, but their souls. This is how he was struck by the existence of Muslim piety and by aspects of Islam which remain unknown to the vast majority of non-Muslims. In his search for explanations which are otherwise difficult to obtain, he learnt Arabic and studied the Qur'an. In it, he was surprised to find statements on natural phenomena whose meaning can only be understood through modern scientific knowledge.

He then turned to the question of the authenticity of the writings that constitute the Holy Scriptures of the monotheistic religions. Finally, in the case of the Bible, he proceeded to a confrontation between these writings and scientific data.

The results of his research into the Judeo-Christian Revelation and the Qur'an are set out in this book.

Introduction

Each of the three monotheistic religions possess its own collection of Scriptures. For the faithful-be they Jews, Christians or Muslims-these documents constitute the foundation of their belief. For them they are the material transcription of a divine Revelation; directly, as in the case of Abraham and Moses, who received the commandments from God Himself, or indirectly, as in the case of Jesus and Muhammad, the first of whom stated that he was speaking in the name of the Father, and the second of whom transmitted to men the Revelation imparted to him by Archangel Gabriel.

If we take into consideration the objective facts of religious history, we must place the Old Testament, the Gospels and the Qur'an on the same level as being collections of written Revelation. Although this attitude is in principle held by Muslims, the faithful in the West under the predominantly Judeo-Christian influence refuse to ascribe to the Qur'an the character of a book of Revelation.

Such an attitude may be explained by the position each religious community adopts towards the other two with regard to the Scriptures.

Judaism has as its holy book the Hebraic Bible. This differs from the Old Testament of the Christians in that the latter have included several books which did not exist in Hebrew. In practice, this divergence hardly makes any difference to the doctrine. Judaism does not however admit any revelation subsequent to its own.

Christianity has taken the Hebraic Bible for itself and added a few supplements to it. It has not however accepted all the published writings destined to make known to men the Mission of Jesus. The Church has made incisive cuts in the profusion of books relating the life and teachings of Jesus. It has only preserved a

limited number of writings in the New Testament, the most important of which are the four Canonic Gospels. Christianity takes no account of any revelation subsequent to Jesus and his Apostles. It therefore rules out the Qur'an.

The Qur'anic Revelation appeared six centuries after Jesus. It resumes numerous data found in the Hebraic Bible and the Gospels since it quotes very frequently from the 'Torah'[1] and the 'Gospels.' The Qur'an directs all Muslims to believe in the Scriptures that precede it (sura 4, verse 136). It stresses the important position occupied in the Revelation by God's emissaries, such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Prophets and Jesus, to whom they allocate a special position. His birth is described in the Qur'an, and likewise in the Gospels, as a supernatural event. Mary is also given a special place, as indicated by the fact that sura 19 bears her name.

The above facts concerning Islam are not generally known in the West. This is hardly surprising, when we consider the way so many generations in the West were instructed in the religious problems facing humanity and the ignorance in which they were kept about anything related to Islam. The use of such terms as 'Mohammedan religion' and 'Mohammedans' has been instrumental-even to the present day-in maintaining the false notion that beliefs were involved that were spread by the work of man among which God (in the Christian sense) had no place. Many cultivated people today are interested in the philosophical, social and political aspects of Islam, but they do not pause to inquire about the Islamic Revelation itself, as indeed they should.

In what contempt the Muslims are held by certain Christian circles! I experienced this when I tried to start an exchange of ideas arising from a comparative analysis of Biblical and Qur'anic stories on the same theme. I noted a systematic refusal, even for the purposes of simple reflection, to take any account of what the Qur'an had to say on the subject in hand. It is as if a quote from the Qur'an were a reference to the Devil!

A noticeable change seems however to be under way these days at the highest levels of the Christian world. The Office for Non-Christian Affairs at the Vatican has produced a document result. from the Second Vatican Council under the French title *Orientations pour un dialogue entre Chrétiens et Musulmans*[2]

(Orientations for a Dialogue between Christians and Muslims), third French edition dated 1970, which bears witness to the profound change in official attitude. Once the document has invited the reader to clear away the "out-dated image, inherited from the past, or distorted by prejudice and slander" that Christians have of Islam, the Vatican document proceeds to "recognize the past injustice towards the Muslims for which the West, with its Christian education, is to blame". It also criticizes the misconceptions Christians have been under concerning Muslim fatalism, Islamic legalism, fanaticism, etc. It stresses belief in unity of God and reminds us how surprised the audience was at the Muslim University of Al Azhar, Cairo, when Cardinal Koenig proclaimed this unity at the Great Mosque during an official conference in March, 1969. It reminds us also that the Vatican Office in 1967 invited Christians to offer their best wishes to Muslims at the end of the Fast of Ramadan with "genuine religious worth".

Such preliminary steps towards a closer relationship between the Roman Catholic Curia and Islam have been followed by various manifestations and consolidated by encounters between the two. There has been, however, little publicity accorded to events of such great importance in the western world, where they took place and where there are ample means of communication in the form of press, radio and television.

The newspapers gave little coverage to the official visit of Cardinal Pignedoli, the President of the Vatican Office of Non-Christian Affairs, on 24th April, 1974, to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. The French newspaper *Le Monde* on 25th April, 1974, dealt with it in a few lines. What momentous news they contain, however, when we read how the Cardinal conveyed to the Sovereign a message from Pope Paul VI expressing "the regards of His Holiness, moved by a profound belief in the unification of Islamic and Christian worlds in the worship of a single God, to His Majesty King Faisal as supreme head of the Islamic world". Six months later, in October 1974, the Pope received the official visit to the Vatican of the Grand Ulema of Saudi Arabia. It occasioned a dialogue between Christians and Muslims on the "Cultural Rights of Man in Islam". The

Vatican newspaper, *Observatore Romano*, on 26th October, 1974, reported this historic event in a front page story that took up more space than the report on the closing day of the meeting held by the Synod of Bishops in Rome.

The Grand Ulema of Saudi Arabia were afterwards received by the Ecumenical Council of Churches of Geneva and by the Lord Bishop of Strasbourg, His Grace Elchinger. The Bishop invited them to join in midday prayer before him in his cathedral. The fact that the event was reported seems to be more on account of its unusual nature than because of its considerable religious significance. At all events, among those whom I questioned about this religious manifestation, there were very few who replied that they were aware of it.

The open-minded attitude Pope Paul VI has towards Islam will certainly become a milestone in the relations between the two religions. He himself said that he was "moved by a profound belief in the unification of the Islamic and Christian worlds in the worship of a single God". This reminder of the sentiments of the head of the Catholic Church concerning Muslims is indeed necessary. Far too many Christians, brought up in a spirit of open hostility, are against any reflection about Islam on principle. The Vatican document notes this with regret. It is on account of this that they remain totally ignorant of what Islam is in reality, and retain notions about the Islamic Revelation which are entirely mistaken.

Nevertheless, when studying an aspect of the Revelation of a monotheistic religion, it seems quite in order to compare what the other two have to say on the same subject. A comprehensive study of a problem is more interesting than a compartmentalized one. The confrontation between certain subjects dealt with in the Scriptures and the facts of 20th century science will therefore, in this work, include all three religions. In addition it will be useful to realize that the three religions should form a tighter block by virtue of their closer relationship at a time when they are all threatened by the onslaught of materialism. The notion that science and religion are incompatible is as equally prevalent in countries under the Judeo-Christian influence as in the world of Islam-especially in scientific circles. If this question were to be dealt with comprehensively, a series of lengthy exposes would be necessary. In this work, I intend to tackle only one aspect of it: the examination of the Scriptures themselves in the light of modern scientific knowledge.

Before proceeding with our task, we must ask a fundamental question: How authentic are today's texts? It is a question which entails an examination of the circumstances surrounding their composition and the way in which they have come down to us.

In the West the critical study of the Scriptures is something quite recent. For hundreds of years people were content to accept the Bible-both Old and New Testaments-as it was. A reading produced nothing more than remarks vindicating it. It would have been a sin to level the slightest criticism at it. The clergy were privileged in that they were easily able to have a comprehensive knowledge of the Bible, while the majority of laymen heard only selected readings as part of a sermon or the liturgy.

Raised to the level of a specialized study, textual criticism has been valuable in uncovering and disseminating problems which are often very serious. How disappointing it is therefore to read works of a so-called critical nature which, when faced with very real problems of interpretation, merely provide passages of an apologetical nature by means of which the author contrives to hide his dilemma. Whoever retains his objective judgment and power of thought at such a moment will not find the improbabilities and contradictions any the less persistent. One can only regret an attitude which, in the face of all logical reason, upholds certain passages in the Biblical Scriptures even though they are riddled with errors. It can exercise an extremely damaging influence upon the cultivated mind with regard to belief in God. Experience shows however that even if the few are able to distinguish fallacies of this kind, the vast majority of Christians have never taken any account of such incompatibilities with their secular knowledge, even though they are often very elementary.

Islam has something relatively comparable to the Gospels in some of the Hadiths. These are the collected sayings of Muhammad and stories of his deeds. The Gospels are nothing other than this for Jesus. Some of the collections of Hadiths were written decades after the death of Muhammad, just as the Gospels were

written decades after Jesus. In both cases they bear human witness to events in the past. We shall see how, contrary to what many people think, the authors of the four Canonic Gospels were not the witnesses of the events they relate. The same is true of the Hadiths referred to at the end of this book.

Here the comparison must end because even if the authenticity of such-and-such a Hadith has been discussed and is still under discussion, in the early centuries of the Church the problem of the vast number of Gospels was definitively decided. Only four of them were proclaimed official, or canonic, in spite of the many points on which they do not agree, and order was given for the rest to be concealed; hence the term 'Apocrypha'.

Another fundamental difference in the Scriptures of Christianity and Islam is the fact that Christianity does not have a text which is both revealed and written down. Islam, however, has the Qur'an which fits this description.

The Qur'an is the expression of the Revelation made to Muhammad by the Archangel Gabriel, which was immediately taken down, and was memorized and recited by the faithful in their prayers, especially during the month of Ramadan. Muhammad himself arranged it into suras, and these were collected soon after the death of the Prophet, to form, under the rule of Caliph Uthman (12 to 24 years after the Prophet's death), the text we know today.

In contrast to this, the Christian Revelation is based on numerous indirect human accounts. We do not in fact have an eyewitness account from the life of Jesus, contrary to what many Christians imagine. The question of the authenticity of the Christian and Islamic texts has thus now been formulated.

The confrontation between the texts of the Scriptures and scientific data has always provided man with food for thought.

It was at first held that corroboration between the scriptures and science was a necessary element to the authenticity of the sacred text. Saint Augustine, in letter No. 82, which we shall quote later on, formally established this principle. As science progressed however it became clear that there were discrepancies between Biblical Scripture and science. It was therefore decided that comparison would no longer be made. Thus a situation arose which today, we are forced to admit, puts Biblical exegetes and scientists in opposition to one another. We cannot, after all, accept a divine Revelation making statements which are totally inaccurate. There was only one way of logically reconciling the two; it lay in not considering a passage containing unacceptable scientific data to be genuine. This solution was not adopted. Instead, the integrity of the text was stubbornly maintained and experts were obliged to adopt a position on the truth of the Biblical Scriptures which, for the scientist, is hardly tenable.

Like Saint Augustine for the Bible, Islam has always assumed that the data contained in the Holy Scriptures were in agreement with scientific fact. A modern examination of the Islamic Revelation has not caused a change in this position. As we shall see later on, the Qur'an deals with many subjects of interest to science, far more in fact than the Bible. There is no comparison between the limited number of Biblical statements which lead to a confrontation With science, and the profusion of subjects mentioned in the Qur'an that are of a scientific nature. None of the latter can be contested from a scientific point of view. this is the basic fact that emerges from our study. We shall see at the end of this work that such is not the case for the Hadiths. These are collections of the Prophet's sayings, set aside from the Qur'anic Revelation, certain of which are scientifically unacceptable. The Hadiths in question have been under study in accordance with the strict principles of the Qur'an which dictate that science and reason should always be referred to, if necessary to deprive them of any authenticity.

These reflections on the scientifically acceptable or unacceptable nature of a certain Scripture need some explanation. It must be stressed that when scientific data are discussed here, what is meant is data definitely established. This consideration rules out any explanatory theories, once useful in illuminating a phenomenon and easily dispensed with to make way for further explanations more in keeping with scientific progress.

What I intend to consider here are incontrovertible facts and even if science can only provide incomplete data, they will nevertheless be sufficiently well established to be used Without fear of error.

Scientists do not, for example, have even an approximate date for man's appearance on Earth. They have however discovered remains of human works which we can situate beyond a shadow of a doubt at before the tenth millenium B.C. Hence we cannot consider the Biblical reality on this subject to be compatible with science. In the Biblical text of Genesis, the dates and genealogies given would place man's origins (i.e. the creation of Adam) at roughly thirty-seven centuries B.C. In the future, science may be able to provide us with data that are more precise than our present calculations, but we may rest assured that it will never tell us that man first appeared on Earth 6,786 years ago, as does the Hebraic calendar for 1976. The Biblical data concerning the antiquity of man are therefore inaccurate.

This confrontation with science excludes all religious problems in the true sense of the word. Science does not, for example, have any explanation of the process whereby God manifested Himself to Moses. The same may be said for the mystery surrounding the manner in which Jesus was born in the absence of a biological father. The Scriptures moreover give no material explanation of such data. This present study is concerned With what the Scriptures tell us about extremely varied natural phenomena, which they surround to a lesser or greater extent with commentaries and explanations. With this in mind, we must note the contrast between the rich abundance of information on a given subject in the Qur'anic Revelation and the modesty of the other two revelations on the same subject.

It was in a totally objective spirit, and without any preconceived ideas that I first examined the Qur'anic Revelation. I was looking for the degree of compatibility between the Qur'anic text and the data of modern science. I knew from translations that the Qur'an often made allusion to all sorts of natural phenomena, but I had only a summary knowledge of it. It was only when I examined the text very closely in Arabic that I kept a list of them at the end of which I had to acknowledge the evidence in front of me: the Qur'an did not contain a single statement that was assailable from a modern scientific point of view.

I repeated the same test for the Old Testament and the Gospels, always preserving the same objective outlook. In the former I did not even have to go beyond the first book, Genesis, to find statements totally out of keeping With the cast-iron facts of modern science.

On opening the Gospels, one is immediately confronted with a serious problem. On the first page we find the genealogy of Jesus, but Matthew's text is in evident contradiction to Luke's on the same question. There is a further problem in that the latter's data on the antiquity of man on Earth are incompatible with modern knowledge.

The existence of these contradictions, improbabilities and incompatibilities does not seem to me to detract from the belief in God. They involve only man's responsibility. No one can say what the original texts might have been, or identify imaginative editing, deliberate manipulations of them by men, or unintentional modification of the Scriptures. What strikes us today, when we realize Biblical contradictions and incompatibilities with well-established scientific data, is how specialists studying the texts either pretend to be unaware of them, or else draw attention to these defects then try to camouflage them with dialectic acrobatics. When we come to the Gospels according to Matthew and John, I shall provide examples of this brilliant use of apologetical turns of phrase by eminent experts in exegesis. Often the attempt to camouflage an improbability or a contradiction, prudishly called a 'difficulty', is successful. This explains why so many Christians are unaware of the serious defects contained in the Old Testament and the Gospels. The reader will find precise examples of these in the first and second parts of this work.

In the third part, there is the illustration of an unusual application of science to a holy Scripture, the contribution of modern secular knowledge to a better understanding of certain verses in the Qur'an which until now have remained enigmatic, if not incomprehensible. Why should we be surprised at this when we know that, for Islam, religion and science have always been considered twin sisters? From the very beginning, Islam directed people to cultivate science; the application of this precept brought with it the prodigious

strides in science taken during the great era of Islamic civilization, from which, before the Renaissance, the West itself benefited. In the confrontation between the Scriptures and science a high point of understanding has been reached owing to the light thrown on Qur'anic passages by modern scientific knowledge. Previously these passages were obscure owing to the non-availability of knowledge which could help interpret them.

The Old Testament

General Outlines

Who is the author of the Old Testament?

One wonders how many readers of the Old Testament, if asked the above question, would reply by repeating what they had read in the introduction to their Bible. They might answer that, even though it was written by men inspired by the Holy Ghost, the author was God.

Sometimes, the author of the Bible's presentation confines himself to informing his reader of this succinct observation which puts an end to all further questions. Sometimes he corrects it by warning him that details may subsequently have been added to the primitive text by men, but that nonetheless, the litigious character of a passage does not alter the general 'truth' that proceeds from it. This 'truth' is stressed very heavily. The Church Authorities answer for it, being the only body, With the assistance of the Holy Ghost, able to enlighten the faithful on such points. Since the Councils held in the Fourth century, it was the Church that issued the list of Holy Books, ratified by the Councils of Florence (1441), Trent (1546), and the First Vatican Council (1870), to form what today is known as the Canon. Just recently, after so many encyclicals, the Second Vatican Council published a text concerning the Revelation which is extremely important. It took three years (1962-1966) of strenuous effort to produce. The vast majority of the Bible's readers who find this highly reassuring information at the head of a modern edition have been quite satisfied with the guarantees of authenticity made over past centuries and have hardly thought it possible to debate them.

When one refers however to works written by clergymen, not meant for mass publication, one realizes that the question concerning the authenticity of the books in the Bible is much more complex than one might suppose *a priori*. For example, when one consults the modern publication in separate installments of the Bible in French translated under the guidance of the Biblical School of Jerusalem[3], the tone appears to be very different. One realizes that the Old Testament, like the New Testament, raises problems with controversial elements that, for the most part, the authors of commentaries have not concealed.

We also find highly precise data in more condensed studies of a very objective nature, such as Professor Edmond Jacob's study. *The Old Testament* (L'Ancien Testament)[4]. This book gives an excellent general view.

Many people are unaware, and Edmond Jacob points this out, that there were originally a number of texts and not just one. Around the Third century B.C., there were at least three forms of the Hebrew text: the text which was to become the Masoretic text, the text which was used, in part at least, for the Greek translation, and the Samaritan Pentateuch. In the First century B.C., there was a tendency towards the establishment of a single text, but it was not until a century after Christ that the Biblical text was definitely established.

If we had had the three forms of the text, comparison would have been possible, and we could have reached an opinion concerning what the original might have been. Unfortunately, we do not have the slightest idea. Apart from the Dead Sea Scrolls (Cave of Qumran) dating from a pre-Christian era near the time of Jesus, a papyrus of the Ten Commandments of the Second century A.D. presenting variations from the classical text, and a few fragments from the Fifth century A.D. (Geniza of Cairo), the oldest Hebrew text of the Bible dates from the Ninth century A.D.

The Septuagint was probably the first translation in Greek. It dates from the Third century B.C. and was written by Jews in Alexandria. It was on this text that the New Testament was based. It remained authoritative until the Seventh century A.D. The basic Greek texts in general use in the Christian world are from the manuscripts catalogued under the title *Codex Vaticanus* in the Vatican City and *Codex Sinaiticus* at the British Museum, London. They date from the Fourth century A.D.

At the beginning of the Fifth century A.D., Saint Jerome was able to produce a text in Latin using Hebrew documents. It was later to be called the *Vulgate* on account of its universal distribution after the Seventh century A.D.

For the record, we shall mention the Aramaic version and the Syriac (Peshitta) version, but these are incomplete.

All of these versions have enabled specialists to piece together so-called 'middle-of-the-road' texts, a sort of compromise between the different versions. Multi-lingual collections have also been produced which juxtapose the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Syriac, Aramaic and even Arabic versions. This is the case of the famous Walton Bible (London, 1667). For the sake of completeness, let us mention that diverging Biblical conceptions are responsible for the fact that the various Christian churches do not all accept exactly the same books and have not until now had identical ideas on translation into the same language. *The Ecumenical Translation of the Old Testament* is a work of unification written by numerous Catholic and Protestant experts now nearing completion[5] and should result in a work of synthesis.

Thus the human element in the Old Testament is seen to be quite considerable. It is not difficult to understand why from version to version, and translation to translation, with all the corrections inevitably resulting, it was possible for the original text to have been transformed during the course of more than two thousand years.

ORIGINS OF THE BIBLE

Before it became a collection of books, it was a folk tradition that relied entirely upon human memory, originally the only means of passing on ideas. This tradition was sung.

"At an elementary stage, writes E. Jacob, every people sings; in Israel, as elsewhere, poetry preceded prose. Israel sang long and well; led by circumstances of his history to the heights of joy and the depths of despair, taking part with intense feeling in all that happened to it, for everything in their eyes had a sense, Israel gave its song a wide variety of expression". They sang for the most diverse reasons and E. Jacob mentions a number of them to which we find the accompanying songs in the Bible: eating songs, harvest songs, songs connected with work, like the famous Well Song (Numbers 21, 17), wedding songs, as in the Song of Songs, and mourning songs. In the Bible there are numerous songs of war and among these we find the Song of Deborah (Judges 5, 1-32) exalting Israel's victory desired and led by Yahweh Himself, (Numbers 10, 35); "And whenever the ark (of alliance) set out, Moses said, 'Arise, oh Yahweh, and let thy enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee'".

There are also the Maxims and Proverbs (Book of Proverbs, Proverbs and Maxims of the Historic Books), words of blessing and curse, and the laws decreed to man by the Prophets on reception of their Divine mandate.

E. Jacobs notes that these words were either passed down from family to family or channelled through the sanctuaries in the form of an account of the history of God's chosen people. History quickly turned into fable, as in the Fable of Jotham (Judges 9, 7-21), where "the trees went forth to anoint a king over them; and they asked in turn the olive tree, the fig tree, the vine and the bramble", which allows E. Jacob to note "animated by the need to tell a good story, the narration was not perturbed by subjects or times whose history was not well known", from which he concludes:

"It is probable that what the Old Testament narrates about Moses and the patriarchs only roughly corresponds to the succession of historic facts. The narrators however, even at the stage of oral transmission, were able to bring into play such grace and imagination to blend between them highly varied episodes, that when all is said and done, they were able to present as a history that was fairly credible to critical thinkers what happened at the beginning of humanity and the world".

There is good reason to believe that after the Jewish people settled in Canaan, at the end of the Thirteenth century B.C., writing was used to preserve and hand down the tradition. There was not however complete accuracy, even in what to men seems to demand the greatest durability, i.e. the laws. Among these, the laws which are supposed to have been written by God's own hand, the Ten Commandments, were transmitted in the Old Testament in two versions; Exodus (20,1-21) and Deuteronomy (5, 1-30). They are the same in spirit, but the variations are obvious. There is also a concern to keep a large written record of contracts, letters, lists of personalities (Judges, high city officials, genealogical tables), lists of offerings and plunder. In this way, archives were created which provided documentation for the later editing of definitive works resulting in the books we have today. Thus in each book there is a mixture of different literary genres: it can be left to the specialists to find the reasons for this odd assortment of documents.

The Old Testament is a disparate whole based upon an initially oral tradition. It is interesting therefore to compare the process by which it was constituted with what could happen in another period and another place at the time when a primitive literature was born.

Let us take, for example, the birth of French literature at the time of the Frankish Royalty. The same oral tradition presided over the preservation of important deeds: wars, often in the defense of Christianity, various sensational events, where heroes distinguished themselves, that were destined centuries later to inspire court poets, chroniclers and authors of various 'cycles'. In this way, from the Eleventh century A.D. onwards, these narrative poems, in which reality is mixed with legend, were to appear and constitute the first monument in epic poetry. The most famous of all is *the Song of Roland* (La Chanson de Roland) a biographical chant about a feat of arms in which Roland was the commander of Emperor Charlemagne's rearguard on its way home from an expedition in Spain. The sacrifice of Roland is not just an episode invented to meet the needs of the story. It took place on 15th August, 778. In actual fact it was an attack by Basques living in the mountains. This literary work is not just legend ; it has a historical basis, but no historian would take it literally.

This parallel between the birth of the Bible and a secular literature seems to correspond exactly with reality. It is in no way meant to relegate the whole Biblical text as we know it today to the store of mythological collections, as do so many of those who systematically negate the idea of God. It is perfectly possible to believe in the reality of the Creation, God's transmission to Moses of the Ten Commandments, Divine intercession in human affairs, e.g. at the time of Solomon. This does not stop us, at the same time, from considering that what has been conveyed to us is the gist of these facts, and that the detail in the description should be subjected to rigorous criticism, the reason for this being that the element of human participation in the transcription of originally oral traditions is so great

The Books of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is a collection of works of greatly differing length and many different genres. They were written in several languages over a period of more than nine hundred years, based on oral traditions. Many of these works were corrected and completed in accordance with events or special requirements, often at periods that were very distant from one another.

This copious literature probably flowered at the beginning of the Israelite Monarchy, around the Eleventh century B.C. It was at this period that a body of scribes appeared among the members of the royal household. They were cultivated men whose role was not limited to writing. The first incomplete writings, mentioned in the preceding chapter, may date from this period. There was a special reason for writing these works down; there were a certain number of songs (mentioned earlier), the prophetic oracles of Jacob and Moses, the Ten Commandments and, on a more general level, the legislative texts which established a religious tradition before the formation of the law. All these texts constitute fragments scattered here and there throughout the various collections of the Old Testament.

It was not until a little later, possibly during the Tenth century B.C., that the so-called 'Yahvist'[6] text of the Pentateuch was written. This text was to form the backbone of the first five books ascribed to Moses. Later, the so-called 'Elohists'[7] text was to be added, and also the so-called 'Sacerdotal'[8] version. The initial Yahvist text deals with the origins of the world up to the death of Jacob. This text comes from the southern kingdom, Judah.

At the end of the Ninth century and in the middle of the Eighth century B.C., the prophetic influence of Elias and Elisha took shape and spread. We have their books today. This is also the time of the Elohist text of the Pentateuch which covers a much smaller period than the Yahvist text because it limits itself to facts relating to Abraham, Jacob and Joseph. The books of Joshua and Judges date from this time.

The Eighth century B.C. saw the appearance of the writer-prophets: Amos and Hosea in Israel, and Michah in Judah.

In 721 B.C., the fall of Samaria put an end to the Kingdom of Israel. The Kingdom of Judah took over its religious heritage. The collection of Proverbs dates from this period, distinguished in particular by the fusion into a single book of the Yahvist and Elohist texts of the Pentateuch; in this way the Torah was constituted. Deuteronomy was written at this time.

In the second half of the Seventh century B.C., the reign of Josiah coincided with the appearance of the prophet Jeremiah, but his work did not take definitive shape until a century later.

Before the first deportation to Babylon in 598 B.C., there appeared the Books of Zephaniah, Nahum and Habakkuk. Ezekiel was already prophesying during this first deportation. The fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. marked the beginning of the second deportation which lasted until 538 B.C.

The Book of Ezekiel, the last great prophet and the prophet of exile, was not arranged into its present form until after his death by the scribes that were to become his spiritual inheritors. These same scribes were to resume Genesis in a third version, the so-called 'Sacerdotal' version, for the section going from the Creation to the death of Jacob. In this way a third text was to be inserted into the central fabric of the Yahvist and Elohist texts of the Torah. We shall see later on, in the books written roughly two and four centuries earlier, an aspect of the intricacies of this third text. It was at this time that the Lamentations appeared.

On the order of Cyrus, the deportation to Babylon came to an end in 538 B.C. The Jews returned to Palestine and the Temple at Jerusalem was rebuilt. The prophets' activities began again, resulting in the books of Haggai, Zechariah, the third book of Isaiah, Malachi, Daniel and Baruch (the last being in Greek). The period following the deportation is also the period of the Books of Wisdom: Proverbs was written definitively around 480 B.C., Job in the middle of the Fifth century B.C., Ecclesiastes or Koheleth dates from the Third century B.C., as do the Song of Songs, Chronicles I & II, Ezra and Nehemiah; Ecclesiasticus or Sirach appeared in the Second century B.C.; the Book of Wisdom and the Book of Maccabees I & II were written one century before Christ. The Books of Ruth, Esther and Jonah are not easily datable. The same is true for Tobit and Judith. All these dates are given on the understanding that there may have been subsequent adaptations, since it was only circa one century before Christ that form was first given to the writings of the Old Testament. For many this did not become definitive until one century after Christ.

Thus the Old Testament appears as a literary monument to the Jewish people, from its origins to the coming of Christianity. The books it consists of were written, completed and revised between the Tenth and the First centuries B.C. This is in no way a personal point of view on the history of its composition. The essential data for this historical survey were taken from the entry *The Bible* in the Encyclopedia Universalis[9] by J. P. Sandroz, a professor at the Dominican Faculties, Saulchoir. To understand what the Old Testament represents, it is important to retain this information, correctly established today by highly qualified specialists.

A Revelation is mingled in all these writings, but all we possess today is what men have seen fit to leave us. These men manipulated the texts to please themselves, according to the circumstances they were in and the necessities they had to meet.

When these objective data are compared with those found in various prefaces to Bibles destined today for mass publication, one realizes that facts are presented in them in quite a different way. Fundamental facts concerning the writing of the books are passed over in silence, ambiguities which mislead the reader are maintained, facts are minimalised to such an extent that a false idea of reality is conveyed. A large number of prefaces or introductions to the Bible misrepresent reality in this way. In the case of books that were adapted several times (like the Pentateuch), it is said that certain details may have been added later on. A discussion of an unimportant passage of a book is introduced, but crucial facts warranting lengthy expositions are passed over in silence. It is distressing to see such inaccurate information on the Bible maintained for mass publication.

THE TORAH OR PENTATEUCH

Torah is the Semitic name.

The Greek expression, which in English gives us 'Pentateuch', designates a work in five parts; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These were to form the five primary elements of the collection of thirty-nine volumes that makes up the Old Testament.

This group of texts deals with the origins of the world up to the entry of the Jewish people into Canaan, the land promised to them after their exile in Egypt, more precisely until the death of Moses. The narration of these facts serves however as a general framework for a description of the provisions made for the religious and social life of the Jewish people, hence the name Law or Torah.

Judaism and Christianity for many centuries considered that the author was Moses himself. Perhaps this affirmation was based on the fact that God said to Moses (Exodus 17, 14): "Write this (the defeat of Amalek) as a memorial in a book", or again, talking of the Exodus from Egypt, "Moses wrote down their starting places" (Numbers 33, 2), and finally "And Moses wrote this law" (Deuteronomy 31, 9). From the First century B.C. onwards, the theory that Moses wrote the Pentateuch was upheld; Flavius Josephus and Philo of Alexandria maintain it.

Today, this theory has been completely abandoned; everybody is in agreement on this point. The New Testament nevertheless ascribes the authorship to Moses. Paul, in his Letter to the Romans (10, 5) quoting from Leviticus, affirms that "Moses writes that the man who practices righteousness which is based on the law . . ." etc. John, in his Gospel (5,46-47), makes Jesus say the following: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" We have here an example of editing, because the Greek word that corresponds to the original (written in Greek) is *episteuete*, so that the Evangelist is putting an affirmation into Jesus's mouth that is totally wrong: the following demonstrates this.

I am borrowing the elements of this demonstration from Father de Vaux, Head of the Biblical School of Jerusalem. He prefaced his French translation of Genesis in 1962 with a General Introduction to the Pentateuch which contained valuable arguments. These ran contrary to the affirmations of the Evangelists on

the authorship of the work in question. Father de Vaux reminds us that the "Jewish tradition which was followed by Christ and his Apostles" was accepted up to the end of the Middle Ages. The only person to contest this theory was Abenezra in the Twelfth century. It was in the Sixteenth century that Calstadt noted that Moses could not have written the account of his own death in Deuteronomy (34, 5-12). The author then quotes other critics who refuse to ascribe to Moses a part, at least, of the Pentateuch. It was above all the work of Richard Simon, father of the Oratory, *Critical History of the Old Testament* (*Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*) 1678, that underlined the chronological difficulties, the repetitions, the confusion of the stories and stylistic differences in the Pentateuch. The book caused a scandal. R. Simon's line of argument was barely followed in history books at the beginning of the Eighteenth century. At this time, the references to antiquity very often proceeded from what "Moses had written".

One can easily imagine how difficult it was to combat a legend strengthened by Jesus himself who, as we have seen, supported it in the New Testament. It is to Jean Astruc, Louis XV's doctor, that we owe the decisive argument.

By publishing, in 1753, *his Conjectures on the original writings which it appears Moses used to compose the Book of Genesis* (*Conjectures sur les Mémoires originaux dont il paraît que Moïse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse*), he placed the accent on the plurality of sources. He was probably not the first to have noticed it, but he did however have the courage to make public an observation of prime importance: two texts, each denoted by the way in which God was named either Yahweh or Elohim, were present side by side in Genesis. The latter therefore contained two juxtaposed texts. Eichorn (1780-1783) made the same discovery for the other four books; then Ilgen (1798) noticed that one of the texts isolated by Astruc, the one where God is named Elohim, was itself divided into two. The Pentateuch literally fell apart.

The Nineteenth century saw an even more minute search into the sources. In 1854, four sources were recognised. They were called the Yahvist version, the Elohist version, Deuteronomy, and the Sacerdotal version. It was even possible to date them:

- 1) The Yahvist version was placed in the Ninth century B.C. (written in Judah)
- 2) The Elohist version was probably a little more recent (written in Israel)
- 3) Deuteronomy was from the Eighth century B.C. for some (E. Jacob) , and from the time of Josiah for others (Father de Vaux)
- 4) The Sacerdotal version came from the period of exile or after the exile: Sixth century B.C.

It can be seen that the arrangement of the text of the Pentateuch spans at least three centuries.

The problem is, however, even more complex. In 1941, A. Lods singled out three sources in the Yahvist version, four in the Elohist version, six in Deuteronomy, nine in the Sacerdotal version, "not including the additions spread out among eight different authors" writes Father de Vaux. More recently, it has been thought that "many of the constitutions or laws contained in the Pentateuch had parallels outside the Bible going back much further than the dates ascribed to the documents themselves" and that "many of the stories of the Pentateuch presupposed a background that was different from-and older than-the one from which these documents were supposed to have come". This leads on to "an interest in the formation of traditions". The problem then appears so complicated that nobody knows where he is anymore.

The multiplicity of sources brings with it numerous disagreements and repetitions. Father de Vaux gives examples of this overlapping of traditions in the case of the Flood, the kidnapping of Joseph, his adventures in Egypt, disagreement of names relating to the same character, differing descriptions of important events.

Thus the Pentateuch is shown to be formed from various traditions brought together more or less skillfully by its authors. The latter sometimes juxtaposed their compilations and sometimes adapted the stories for the sake of synthesis. They allowed improbabilities and disagreements to appear in the texts, however, which have led modern man to the objective study of the sources.

As far as textual criticism is concerned, the Pentateuch provides what is probably the most obvious example of adaptations made by the hand of man. These were made at different times in the history of the Jewish people, taken from oral traditions and texts handed down from preceding generations. It was begun in the Tenth or Ninth century B.C. with the Yahvist tradition which took the story from its very beginnings. The latter sketches Israel's own particular destiny to "fit it back into God's Grand Design for humanity" (Father de Vaux). It was concluded in the Sixth century B.C. with the Sacerdotal tradition that is meticulous in its precise mention of dates and genealogies.[10] Father de Vaux writes that "The few stories this tradition has of its own bear witness to legal preoccupations: Sabbatical rest at the completion of the Creation, the alliance with Noah, the alliance with Abraham and the circumcision, the purchase of the Cave of Makpela that gave the Patriarchs land in Canaan". We must bear in mind that the Sacerdotal tradition dates from the time of the deportation to Babylon and the return to Palestine starting in 538 B.C. There is therefore a mixture of religious and purely political problems.

For Genesis alone, the division of the Book into three sources has been firmly established: Father de Vaux in the commentary to his translation lists for each source the passages in the present text of Genesis that rely on them. On the evidence of these data it is possible to pinpoint the contribution made by the various sources to any one of the chapters. For example, in the case of the Creation, the Flood and the period that goes from the Flood to Abraham, occupying as it does the first eleven chapters of Genesis, we can see alternating in the Biblical text a section of the Yahvist and a section of the Sacerdotal texts. The Elohist text is not present in the first eleven chapters. The overlapping of Yahvist and Sacerdotal contributions is here quite clear. For the Creation and up to Noah (first five chapter's), the arrangement is simple: a Yahvist passage alternates with a Sacerdotal passage from beginning to end of the narration. For the Flood and especially chapters 7 and 8 moreover, the cutting of the text according to its source is narrowed down to very short passages and even to a single sentence. In the space of little more than a hundred lines of English text, the text changes seventeen times. It is from this that the improbabilities and contradictions arise when we read the present-day text. (see Table on page 15 for schematic distribution of sources)

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

In these books we enter into the history of the Jewish people, from the time they came to the Promised Land (which is most likely to have been at the end of the Thirteenth century B.C.) to the deportation to Babylon in the Sixth century B.C.

Here stress is laid upon what one might call the 'national event' which is presented as the fulfillment of Divine word. In the narration however, historical accuracy has rather been brushed aside: a work such as the Book of Joshua complies first and foremost with theological intentions. With this in mind, E. Jacob underlines the obvious contradiction between archaeology and the texts in the case of the supposed destruction of Jericho and Ay.

The Book of Judges is centered on the defense of the chosen people against surrounding enemies and on the support given to them by God. The Book was adapted several times, as Father A. Lefèvre notes with great objectivity in his Preamble to the Crampon Bible. the various prefaces in the text and the appendices bear witness to this. The story of Ruth is attached to the narrations contained in Judges.

TABLE OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE YAHVIST AND SACERDOTAL TEXTS IN CHAPTERS 1 TO 11 in GENESIS)

The first figure indicates the chapter.

The second figure in brackets indicates the number of phrases, sometimes divided into two parts indicated by the letters a and b.

Letters: Y indicates Yahvist text S indicates Sacerdotal text

Example: The first line of the table indicates: from Chapter 1, phrase 1 to Chapter 2, phrase 4a, the text published in present day Bibles is the Sacerdotal text.

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Phrase</i>	<i>to Chapter</i>	<i>Phrase</i>	<i>Text</i>
1	(1)	2	(4a)	S
2	(4b)	4	(26)	Y
5	(1)	5	(32)	S
6	(1)	6	(8)	Y
6	(9)	6	(22)	S
7	(1)	7	(5)	Y
7	(6)			S
7	(7)	7	(10)	Y adapted
7	(11)			S
7	(12)			Y
7	(13)	7	(16a)	S
7	(16b)	7	(17)	Y
7	(18)	7	(21)	S
7	(22)	7	(23)	Y
7	(24)	8	(2a)	S
8	(2b)		(5)	Y
8	(3)	8	(12)	S
8	(6)	8		Y
8	(13a)			S
8	(13b)		(19)	Y
8	(14)	8	(22)	S
8	(20)	8	(17)	Y
9	(1)	9	(27)	S
9	(18)	9	(7)	Y
9	(28)	10	(19)	S
10	(8)	10	(23)	Y
10	(20)	10	(30)	S
10	(24)	10	(32)	Y
10	(31)	10	(9)	S
11	(1)	11	(32)	Y
11	(10)	11		S

What simpler illustration can there be of the way men have manipulated the Biblical Scriptures?

The Book of Samuel and the two Books of Kings are above all biographical collections concerning Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon. Their historic worth is the subject of debate. From this point of view E. Jacob finds numerous errors in it, because there are sometimes two and even three versions of the same event. The prophets Elias, Elisha and Isaiah also figure here, mixing elements of history and legend. For other commentators, such as Father A. Lefèvre, "the historical value of these books is fundamental."

Chronicles I & II, the Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah have a single author, called 'the Chronicler', writing in the Fourth century B.C. He resumes the whole history of the Creation up to this period, although his genealogical tables only go up to David. In actual fact, he is using above all the Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings, "mechanically copying them out without regard to the inconsistencies" (E. Jacob), but he nevertheless adds precise facts that have been confirmed by archaeology. In these works care is taken to adapt history to the needs of theology. E. Jacob notes that the author "sometimes writes history according to theology". "To explain the fact that King Manasseh, who was a sacrilegious persecutor, had a long and prosperous reign, he postulates a conversion of the King during a stay in Assyria (Chronicles II, 33/11) although there is no mention of this in any Biblical or non-Biblical source". The Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah have been severely criticised because they are full of obscure points, and because the period they deal with (the Fourth century B.C.) is itself not very well known, there being few non-Biblical documents from it.

The Books of Tobit, Judith and Esther are classed among the Historical Books. In them very big liberties are taken with history. proper names are changed, characters and events are invented, all for the best of religious reasons. They are in fact stories designed to serve a moral end, peppered with historical improbabilities and inaccuracies.

The Books of Maccabees are of quite a different order. They provide a version of events that took place in the Second century B.C. which is as exact a record of the history of this period as may be found. It is for this reason that they constitute accounts of great value.

The collection of books under the heading 'historical' is therefore highly disparate. History is treated in both a scientific and a whimsical fashion.

THE PROPHETIC BOOKS

Under this heading we find the preachings of various prophets who in the Old Testament have been classed separately from the first great prophets such as Moses, Samuel, Elias and Elisha, whose teachings are referred to in other books.

The prophetic books cover the period from the Eighth to the Second century B.C.

In the Eighth century B.C., there were the books of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Michah. The first of these is famous for his condemnation of social injustice, the second for his religious corruption which leads him to bodily suffering (for being forced to marry a sacred harlot of a pagan cult), like God suffering for the degradation of His people but still granting them His love. Isaiah is a figure of political history. he is consulted by kings and dominates events; he is the prophet of grandeur. In addition to his personal works, his oracles are published by his disciples right up until the Third century B.C.: protests against iniquities, fear of God's judgement, proclamations of liberation at the time of exile and later on the return of the Jews to Palestine. It is certain that in the case of the second and third Isaiah, the prophetic intention is paralleled by political considerations that are as clear as daylight. The preaching of Michah, a contemporary of Isaiah, follows the same general ideas.

In the Seventh century B.C., Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Nahum and Habakkuk distinguished themselves by their preachings. Jeremiah became a martyr. His oracles were collected by Baruch who is also perhaps the author of Lamentations.

The period of exile in Babylon at the beginning of the Sixth century B.C. gave birth to intense prophetic activity. Ezekiel figures importantly as the consoler of his brothers, inspiring hope among them. His visions are famous. The Book of Obadiah deals with the misery of a conquered Jerusalem.

After the exile, which came to an end in 538 B.C., prophetic activity resumed with Haggai and Zechariah who urged the reconstruction of the Temple. When it was completed, writings going under the name of Malachi appeared. They contain various oracles of a spiritual nature.

One wonders why the Book of Jonah is included in the prophetic books when the Old Testament does not give it any real text to speak of. Jonah is a story from which one principle fact emerges: the necessary submission to Divine Will.

Daniel was written in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek). According to Christian commentators, it is a 'disconcerting' Apocalypse from an historical point of view. It is probably a work from the Maccabean period, Second century B.C. Its author wished to maintain the faith of his countrymen, at the time of the 'abomination of desolation', by convincing them that the moment of deliverance was at hand. (E. Jacob)

THE BOOKS OF POETRY AND WISDOM

These form collections of unquestionable literary unity. Foremost among them are the Psalms, the greatest monument to Hebrew poetry. A large number were composed by David and the others by priests and levites. Their themes are praises, supplications and meditations, and they served a liturgical function.

The book of Job, the book of wisdom and piety *par excellence*, probably dates from 400-500 B.C.

The author of 'Lamentations' on the fall of Jerusalem at the beginning of the Sixth century B.C. may well be Jeremiah.

We must once again mention the Song of Songs, allegorical chants mostly about Divine love, the Book of Proverbs, a collection of the words of Solomon and other wise men of the court, and Ecclesiastes or Koheleth, where earthly happiness and wisdom are debated.

We have, therefore, a collection of works with highly disparate contents written over at least seven centuries, using extremely varied sources before being amalgamated inside a single work.

How was this collection able, over the centuries, to constitute an inseparable whole and-with a few variations according to community-become the book containing the Judeo-Christian Revelation? This book was called in Greek the 'canon' because of the idea of intangibility it conveys.

The amalgam does not date from the Christian period, but from Judaism itself, probably with a primary stage in the Seventh century B.C. before later books were added to those already accepted. It is to be noted however that the first five books, forming the Torah or Pentateuch, have always been given pride of place. Once the proclamations of the prophets (the prediction of a chastisement commensurate with misdemeanour) had been fulfilled, there was no difficulty in adding their texts to the books that had already been admitted. The same was true for the assurances of hope given by these prophets. By the Second century B.C., the 'Canon' of the prophets had been formed.

Other books, e.g. Psalms, on account of their liturgical function, were integrated along with further writings, such as Lamentations, the Book of Wisdom and the Book of Job.

Christianity, which was initially Judeo-Christianity, has been carefully studied-as we shall see later on-by modern authors, such as Cardinal Daniélou. Before it was transformed under Paul's influence, Christianity accepted the heritage of the Old Testament without difficulty. The authors of the Gospels adhered very strictly to the latter, but whereas a 'purge' has been made of the Gospels by ruling out the 'Apocrypha', the same selection has not been deemed necessary for the Old Testament. Everything, or nearly everything, has been accepted.

Who would have dared dispute any aspects of this disparate amalgam before the end of the Middle Ages-in the West at least? The answer is nobody, or almost nobody. From the end of the Middle Ages up to the beginning of modern times, one or two critics began to appear; but, as we have already seen, the Church Authorities have always succeeded in having their own way. Nowadays, there is without doubt a genuine body of textual criticism, but even if ecclesiastic specialists have devoted many of their efforts to examining a multitude of detailed points, they have preferred not to go too deeply into what they euphemistically call 'difficulties'. They hardly seem disposed to study them in the light of modern knowledge. They may well establish parallels with history-principally when history and Biblical narration appear to be in agreement-but so far they have not committed themselves to be a frank and thorough comparison with scientific ideas. They realize that this would lead people to contest notions about the truth of Judeo-Christian Scriptures, which have so far remained undisputed.

The Old Testament and Science Findings

Few of the subjects dealt within the Old Testament, and likewise the Gospels, give rise to a confrontation with the data of modern knowledge. When an incompatibility does occur between the Biblical text and science, however, it is on extremely important points.

As we have already seen in the preceding chapter, historical errors were found in the Bible and we have quoted several of these pinpointed by Jewish and Christian experts in exegesis. The latter have naturally had a tendency to minimize the importance of such errors. They find it quite natural for a sacred author to present historical fact in accordance with theology and to write history to suit certain needs. We shall see further on, in the case of the Gospel according to Matthew, the same liberties taken with reality and the same commentaries aimed at making admissible as reality what is in contradiction to it. A logical and objective mind cannot be content with this procedure.

From a logical angle, it is possible to single out a large number of contradictions and improbabilities. The existence of different sources that might have been used in the writing of a description may be at the origin of two different presentations of the same fact. This is not all; different adaptations, later additions to the text itself, like the commentaries added *a posteriori*, then included in the text later on when a new copy was made-these are perfectly recognized by specialists in textual criticism and very frankly underlined by some of them. In the case of the Pentateuch alone, for example, Father de Vaux in the General Introduction preceding his translation of Genesis (pages 13 and 14), has drawn attention to numerous disagreements. We shall not quote them here since we shall be quoting several of them later on in this study. The general impression one gains is that one must not follow the text to the letter.

Here is a very typical example:

In Genesis (6, 3), God decides just before the Flood henceforth to limit man's lifespan to one hundred and twenty years, "... his days shall be a hundred and twenty years". Further on however, we note in Genesis (11,

10-32) that the ten descendants of Noah had lifespans that range from 148 to 600 years (see table in this chapter showing Noah's descendants down to Abraham). The contradiction between these two passages is quite obvious. The explanation is elementary. The first passage (Genesis 6, 3) is a Yahvist text, probably dating as we have already seen from the Tenth century B.C. The second passage in Genesis (11, 10-32) is a much more recent text (Sixth century B.C.) from the Sacerdotal version. This version is at the origin of these genealogies, which are as precise in their information on lifespans as they are improbable when taken *en masse*.

It is in Genesis that we find the most evident incompatibilities with modern science. These concern three essential points:

- 1) the Creation of the world and its stages;
- 2) the date of the Creation of the world and the date of man's appearance on earth;
- 3) the description of the Flood.

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

As Father de Vaux points out, Genesis "starts with two juxtaposed descriptions of the Creation". When examining them from the point of view of their compatibility with modern scientific data, we must look at each one separately.

First Description of the Creation

The first description occupies the first chapter and the very first verses of the second chapter. It is a masterpiece of inaccuracy from a scientific point of view. It must be examined one paragraph at a time. The text reproduced here is from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.[11]

Chapter 1, verses 1 & 2:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters."

It is quite possible to admit that before the Creation of the Earth, what was to become the Universe as we know it was covered in darkness. To mention the existence of water at this period is however quite simply pure imagination. We shall see in the third part of this book how there is every indication that at the initial stage of the formation of the universe a gaseous mass existed. It is an error to place water in it.

Verses 3 to 5:

"And God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day."

The light circulating in the Universe is the result of complex reactions in the stars. We shall come back to them in the third part of this work. At this stage in the Creation, however, according to the Bible, the stars were not yet formed. The "lights" of the firmament are not mentioned in Genesis until verse 14, when they were created on the Fourth day, "to separate the day from the night", "to give light upon earth"; all of which is accurate. It is illogical, however, to mention the result (light) on the first day, when the cause of this light was created three days later. The fact that the existence of evening and morning is placed on the first day is moreover, purely imaginary; the existence of evening and morning as elements of a single day is only conceivable after the creation of the earth and its rotation under the light of its own star, the Sun!

-verses 6 to 8:

"And God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day."

The myth of the waters is continued here with their separation into two layers by a firmament that in the description of the Flood allows the waters above to pass through and flow onto the earth. This image of the division of the waters into two masses is scientifically unacceptable.

-verses 9 to 13:

"And God said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind upon the earth.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day."

The fact that continents emerged at the period in the earth's history, when it was still covered with water, is quite acceptable scientifically. What is totally untenable is that a highly organized vegetable kingdom with reproduction by seed could have appeared before the existence of the sun (in Genesis it does not appear until the fourth day), and likewise the establishment of alternating nights and days.

-verses 14 to 19:

"And God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmaments of the heavens to separate the day from night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day."

Here the Biblical author's description is acceptable. The only criticism one could level at this passage is the position it occupies in the description as a whole. Earth and Moon emanated, as we know, from their original star, the Sun. To place the creation of the Sun and Moon after the creation of the Earth is contrary to the most firmly established ideas on the formation of the elements of the Solar System.

-verses 20 to 30:

"And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens.' So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day."

This passage contains assertions which are unacceptable.

According to Genesis, the animal kingdom began with the appearance of creatures of the sea and winged birds. The Biblical description informs us that it was not until the next day-as we shall see in the following verses-that the earth itself was populated by animals.

It is certain that the origins of life came from the sea, but this question will not be dealt with until the third part of this book. From the sea, the earth was colonized, as it were, by the animal kingdom. It is from animals living on the surface of the earth, and in particular from one species of reptile which lived in the Second era, that it is thought the birds originated. Numerous biological characteristics common to both species make this

deduction possible. The beasts of the earth are not however mentioned until the sixth day in Genesis; after the appearance of the birds. This order of appearance, beasts of the earth after birds, is not therefore acceptable.

-verses 24 to 31:

"And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.' And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the cattle according to their kinds, and everything that creeps upon the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good."

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion (sic) over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth'".

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

"And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' And God said, 'Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.'" And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day."

This is the description of the culmination of the Creation. The author lists all the living creatures not mentioned before and describes the various kinds of food for man and beast.

As we have seen, the error was to place the appearance of beasts of the earth after that of the birds. Man's appearance is however correctly situated after the other species of living things.

The description of the Creation finishes in the first three verses of Chapter 2:

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host (sic) of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation;

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created."

This description of the seventh day calls for some comment.

Firstly the meaning of certain words. The text is taken from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible mentioned above. The word 'host' signifies here, in all probability, the multitude of beings created. As for the expression 'he rested', it is a manner of translating the Hebrew word 'shabbath', from which the Jewish day for rest is derived, hence the expression in English 'sabbath'.

It is quite clear that the 'rest' that God is said to have taken after his six days' work is a legend. There is nevertheless an explanation for this. We must bear in mind that the description of the creation examined here is taken from the so-called Sacerdotal version, written by priests and scribes who were the spiritual successors of Ezekiel, the prophet of the exile to Babylon writing in the Sixth century B.C. We have already seen how the priests took the Yahvist and Elohist versions of Genesis and remodelled them after their own fashion in accordance with their own preoccupations. Father de Vaux has written that the 'legalist' character of these writings was very essential. An outline of this has already been given above.

Whereas the Yahvist text of the Creation, written several centuries before the Sacerdotal text, makes no mention of God's sabbath, taken after the fatigue of a week's labor, the authors of the Sacerdotal text bring it into their description. They divide the latter into separate days, with the very precise indication of the days of the week. They build it around the sabbatic day of rest which they have to justify to the faithful by pointing out that God was the first to respect it. Subsequent to this practical necessity, the description that follows has an apparently logical religious order, but in fact scientific data permit us to qualify the latter as being of a whimsical nature.

The idea that successive phases of the Creation, as seen by the Sacerdotal authors in their desire to incite people to religious observation, could have been compressed into the space of one week is one that cannot be defended from a scientific point of view. Today we are perfectly aware that the formation of the Universe and the Earth took place in stages that lasted for very long periods. (In the third part of the present work, we shall examine this question when we come to look at the Qur'anic data concerning the Creation). Even if the description came to a close on the evening of the sixth day, without mentioning the seventh day, the 'sabbath' when God is said to have rested, and even if, as in the Qur'anic description, we were permitted to think that they were in fact undefined periods rather than actual days, the Sacerdotal description would still not be any more acceptable. The succession of episodes it contains is an absolute contradiction with elementary scientific knowledge.

It may be seen therefore that the Sacerdotal description of the Creation stands out as an imaginative and ingenious fabrication. Its purpose was quite different from that of making the truth known.

Second Description

The second description of the Creation in Genesis follows immediately upon the first without comment or transitional passage. It does not provoke the same objections.

We must remember that this description is roughly three centuries older and is very short. It allows more space to the creation of man and earthly paradise than to the creation of the Earth and Heavens. It mentions this very briefly

(Chapter 2, 4b-7): "In the day that Yahweh God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up-for Yahweh God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground;

but a flood went up from earth and watered the whole face of the ground-then Yahweh God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

This is the Yahvist text that appears in the text of present day Bibles. The Sacerdotal text was added to it later on, but one may ask if it was originally so brief. Nobody is in a position to say whether the Yahvist text has not, in the course of time, been pared down. We do not know if the few lines we possess represent all that the oldest Biblical text of the Creation had to say.

The Yahvist description does not mention the actual formation of the Earth or the Heavens. It makes it clear that when God created man, there was no vegetation on Earth (it had not yet rained), even though the waters of the Earth had covered its surface. The sequel to the text confirms this: God planted a garden at the same time as man was created. The vegetable kingdom therefore appears on Earth at the same time as man. This is scientifically inaccurate; man did not appear on Earth until a long time after vegetation had been growing on it. We do not know how many hundreds of millions of years separate the two events.

This is the only criticism that one can level at the Yahvist text. The fact that it does not place the creation of man in time in relation to the formation of the world and the earth, unlike the Sacerdotal text, which places them in the same week, frees it from the serious objections raised against the latter.

THE DATE OF THE WORLD'S CREATION AND THE DATE OF MAN'S APPEARANCE ON EARTH.

The Jewish calendar, which follows the data contained in the Old Testament, places the dates of the above very precisely. The second half of the Christian year 1975 corresponds to the beginning of the 5,736th year of the creation of the world. The creation of man followed several days later, so that he has the same numerical age, counted in years, as in the Jewish calendar.

There is probably a correction to be made on account of the fact that time was originally calculated in lunar years, while the calendar used in the West is based on solar years. This correction would have to be made if one wanted to be absolutely exact, but as it represents only 3%, it is of very little consequence. To simplify our calculations, it is easier to disregard it. What matters here is the order of magnitude. It is therefore of little importance if, over a thousand years, our calculations are thirty years out. We are nearer the truth in following this Hebraic estimate of the creation of the world if we say that it happened roughly thirty-seven centuries before Christ.

What does modern science tell us? It would be difficult to reply to the question concerning the formation of the Universe. All we can provide figures for is the era in time when the solar system was formed. It is possible to arrive at a reasonable approximation of this. The time between it and the present is estimated at four and a half billion years. We can therefore measure the margin separating the firmly established reality we know today and the data taken from the Old Testament. We shall expand on this in the third part of the present work. These facts emerge from a close scrutiny of the Biblical text. Genesis provides very precise information on the time that elapsed between Adam and Abraham. For the period from the time of Abraham to the beginnings of Christianity, the information provided is insufficient. It must be supported by other sources.

1. From Adam to Abraham

Genesis provides extremely precise genealogical data in Chapters 4, 5, 11, 21 and 25. They concern all of Abraham's ancestors in direct line back to Adam. They give the length of time each person lived, the father's age at the birth of the son and thus make it easily possible to ascertain the dates of birth and death of each ancestor in relation to the creation of Adam, as the table indicates.

All the data used in this table come from the Sacerdotal text of Genesis, the only Biblical text that provides information of this kind. It may be deduced, according to the Bible, that Abraham was born 1,948 years after Adam.

ABRAHAM'S GENEALOGY

<i>Name</i>	<i>date of birth after creation of Adam</i>	<i>length of life</i>	<i>date of death after creation of Adam</i>
Adam		930	930
Seth	130	912	1042
Enosch	235	905	1140
Kenan	325	910	1235
Mahalaleel	395	895	1290
Jared	460	962	1422
Enoch	622	365	987
Methuselah	687	969	1656
Lamech	874	777	1651
Noah	1056	950	2006
Shem	1556	600	2156
Arpachshad	1658	438	2096
Shelah	1693	433	2122
Eber	1723	464	2187
Peleg	1757	239	1996
Reu	1787	239	2026
Serug	1819	230	2049
Nahor	1849	148	1997
Terah	1878	205	2083
Abraham	1948	175	2123

2. From Abraham to The Beginnings Of Christianity

The Bible does not provide any numerical information on this period that might lead to such precise estimates as those found in Genesis on Abraham's ancestors. We must look to other sources to estimate the time separating Abraham from Jesus. At present, allowing for a slight margin of error, the time of Abraham is situated at roughly eighteen centuries before Jesus. Combined with information in Genesis on the interval separating Abraham and Adam, this would place Adam at roughly thirty-eight centuries before Jesus. This estimate is undeniably wrong: the origins of this inaccuracy arise from the mistakes in the Bible on the Adam-Abraham period. The Jewish tradition still founds its calendar on this. Nowadays, we can challenge the traditional defenders of Biblical truth with the incompatibility between the whimsical estimates of Jewish priests living in the Sixth century B.C. and modern data. For centuries, the events of antiquity relating to Jesus were situated in time according to information based on these estimates.

Before modern times, editions of the Bible frequently provided the reader with a preamble explaining the historical sequence of events that had come to pass between the creation of the world and the time when the books were edited. The figures vary slightly according to the time. For example, the Clementine Vulgate, 1621, gave this information, although it did place Abraham a little earlier and the Creation at roughly the 40th century B.C. Walton's polyglot Bible, produced in the 17th century, in addition to Biblical texts in several languages, gave the reader tables similar to the one shown here for Abraham's ancestors. Almost all

the estimates coincide with the figures given here. With the arrival of modern times, editors were no longer able to maintain such whimsical chronologies without going against scientific discovery that placed the Creation at a much earlier date. They were content to abolish these tables and preambles, but they avoided warning the reader that the Biblical texts on which these chronologies were based had become obsolete and could no longer be considered to express the truth. They preferred to draw a modest veil over them, and invent set-phrases of cunning dialectics that would make acceptable the text as it had formerly been, without any subtractions from it.

This is why the genealogies contained in the Sacerdotal text of the Bible are still honoured, even though in the Twentieth century one cannot reasonably continue to count time on the basis of such fiction.

Modern scientific data do not allow us to establish the date of man's appearance on earth beyond a certain limit. We may be certain that man, with the capacity for action and intelligent thought that distinguishes him from beings that appear to be anatomically similar to him, existed on Earth after a certain estimable date. Nobody however can say at what exact date he appeared. What we can say today is that remains have been found of a humanity capable of human thought and action whose age may be calculated in tens of thousands of years.

This approximate dating refers to the prehistoric human species, the most recently discovered being the Cro-Magnon Man. There have of course been many other discoveries all over the world of remains that appear to be human. These relate to less highly evolved species, and their age could be somewhere in the hundreds of thousands of years. But were they genuine men?

Whatever the answer may be, scientific data are sufficiently precise concerning the prehistoric species like the Cro-Magnon Man, to be able to place them much further back than the epoch in which Genesis places the first men. There is therefore an obvious incompatibility between what we can derive from the numerical data in Genesis about the date of man's appearance on Earth and the firmly established facts of modern scientific knowledge.

THE FLOOD

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 are devoted to the description of the Flood. In actual fact, there are two descriptions; they have not been placed side by side, but are distributed all the way through. Passages are interwoven to give the appearance of a coherent succession of varying episodes. In these three chapters there are, in reality, blatant contradictions; here again the explanation lies in the existence of two quite distinct sources: the Yahvist and Sacerdotal versions.

It has been shown earlier that they formed a disparate amalgam; each original text has been broken down into paragraphs or phrases, elements of one source alternating with the other, so that in the course of the complete description, we go from one to another seventeen times in roughly one hundred lines of English text.

Taken as a whole, the story goes as follows:

Man's corruption had become widespread, so God decided to annihilate him along with all the other living creatures. He warned Noah and told him to construct the Ark into which he was to take his wife, his three sons and their wives, along with other living creatures. The two sources differ for the latter. one passage (Sacerdotal) says that Noah was to take one pair of each species; then in the passage that follows (Yahvist) it is stated that God ordered him to take seven males and seven females from each of the so-called 'pure' animal species, and a single pair from the 'impure' species. Further on, however, it is stated that Noah actually took one pair of each animal. Specialists, such as Father de Vaux, state that the passage in question is from an adaptation of the Yahvist description.

Rainwater is given as the agent of the Flood in one (Yahvist) passage, but in another (Sacerdotal), the Flood is given a double cause: rainwater and the waters of the Earth.

The Earth was submerged right up to and above the mountain peaks. All life perished. After one year, when the waters had receded, Noah emerged from the Ark that had come to rest on Mount Ararat.

One might add that the Flood lasted differing lengths of time according to the source used: forty days for the Yahvist version and one hundred and fifty in the Sacerdotal text.

The Yahvist version does not tell us when the event took place in Noah's life, but the Sacerdotal text tells us that he was six hundred years old. The latter also provides information in its genealogies that situates him in relation to Adam and Abraham. If we calculate according to the information contained in Genesis, Noah was born 1,056 years after Adam (see table of Abraham's Genealogy) and the Flood therefore took place 1,656 years after the creation of Adam. In relation to Abraham, Genesis places the Flood 292 years before the birth of this Patriarch.

According to Genesis, the Flood affected the whole of the human race and all living creatures created by God on the face of the Earth were destroyed. Humanity was then reconstituted by Noah's three sons and their wives so that when Abraham was born roughly three centuries later, he found a humanity that was already re-formed into separate communities. How could this reconstruction have taken place in such a short time? This simple observation deprives the narration of all verisimilitude.

Furthermore, historical data show its incompatibility with modern knowledge. Abraham is placed in the period 1800-1850 B.C., and if the Flood took place, as Genesis suggests in its genealogies, roughly three centuries before Abraham, we would have to place him somewhere in the Twenty-first to Twenty-second century B.C. Modern historical knowledge confirms that at this period, civilizations had sprung up in several parts of the world; for their remains have been left to posterity.

In the case of Egypt for example, the remains correspond to the period preceding the Middle Kingdom (2,100 B.C.) at roughly the date of the First Intermediate Period before the Eleventh Dynasty. In Babylonia it is the Third Dynasty at Ur. We know for certain that there was no break in these civilizations, so that there could have been no destruction affecting the whole of humanity, as it appears in the Bible.

We cannot therefore consider that these three Biblical narrations provide man with an account of facts that correspond to the truth. We are obliged to admit that, objectively speaking, the texts which have come down to us do not represent the expression of reality. We may ask ourselves whether it is possible for God to have revealed anything other than the truth. It is difficult to entertain the idea that God taught to man ideas that were not only fictitious, but contradictory. We naturally arrive therefore at the hypothesis that distortions occurred that were made by man or that arose from traditions passed down from one generation to another by word of mouth, or from the texts of these traditions once they were written down. When one knows that a work such as Genesis was adapted at least twice over a period of not less than three centuries, it is hardly surprising to find improbabilities or descriptions that are incompatible with reality. This is because the progress made in human knowledge has enabled us to know, if not everything, enough at least about certain events to be able to judge the degree of compatibility between our knowledge and the ancient descriptions of them. There is nothing more logical than to maintain this interpretation of Biblical errors which only implicates man himself. It is a great pity that the majority of commentators, both Jewish and Christian, do not hold with it. The arguments they use nevertheless deserve careful attention.

Position Of Christian Authors With Regard To Scientific Error In The Biblical Texts.

A Critical Examination.

One is struck by the diverse nature of Christian commentators' reactions to the existence of these accumulated errors, improbabilities and contradictions. Certain commentators acknowledge some of them and do not hesitate in their work to tackle thorny problems. Others pass lightly over unacceptable statements and insist on defending the text word for word. The latter try to convince people by apologetic declarations, heavily reinforced by arguments which are often unexpected, in the hope that what is logically unacceptable will be forgotten.

In the Introduction to his translation of Genesis, Father de Vaux acknowledges the existence of critical arguments and even expands upon their cogency. Nevertheless, for him the objective reconstitution of past events has little interest. As he writes in his notes, the fact that the Bible resumes "the memory of one or two disastrous floods of the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, enlarged by tradition until they took on the dimensions of a universal cataclysm" is neither here nor there; "the essential thing is, however, that the sacred author has infused into this memory eternal teachings on the justice and mercy of God toward the malice of man and the salvation of the righteous."

In this way justification is found for the transformation of a popular legend into an event of divine proportions-and it is as such that it is thought fit to present the legend to men's faith-following the principle that an author has made use of it to illustrate religious teachings. An apologetic position of this kind justifies all the liberties taken in the composition of writings which are supposed to be sacred and to contain the word of God. If one acknowledges such human interference in what is divine, all the human manipulations of the Biblical texts will be accounted for. If there are theological intentions, all manipulations become legitimate; so that those of the 'Sacerdotal' authors of the Sixth century are justified, including their legalist preoccupations that turned into the whimsical descriptions we have already seen.

A large number of Christian commentators have found it more ingenious to explain errors, improbabilities and contradictions in Biblical descriptions by using the excuse that the Biblical authors were expressing ideas in accordance with the social factors of a different culture or mentality. From this arose the definition of respective 'literary genres' which was introduced into the subtle dialectics of commentators, so that it accounts for all difficulties. Any contradictions there are between two texts are then explained by the difference in the way each author expressed ideas in his own particular 'literary genre'. This argument is not, of course, acknowledged by everybody because it lacks gravity. It has not entirely fallen into disuse today however, and we shall see in the New Testament its extravagant use as an attempt to explain blatant contradictions in the Gospels.

Another way of making acceptable what would be rejected by logic when applied to a litigious text, is to surround the text in question with apologetical considerations. The reader's attention is distracted from the crucial problem of the truth of the text itself and deflected towards other problems.

Cardinal Daniélou's reflections on the Flood follow this mode of expression. They appear in the review *Living God* (Dieu Vivant)[12] under the title: '*Flood, Baptism, Judgment*', (*Deluge, Baptême, Jugement*) where he writes "The oldest tradition of the Church has seen in the theology of the Flood an image of Christ and the Church". It is "an episode of great significance" . . . "a judgment striking the whole human race." Having quoted from Origen in his *Homilies on Ezekiel*, he talks of "'the shipwreck of the entire universe saved in the Ark", Cardinal Daniélou dwells upon the value of the number eight "expressing the number of people that were saved in the Ark (Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives)". He turns to his own use Justin's writings in his *Dialogue*. "They represent the symbol of the eighth day when Christ rose from the dead" and "Noah, the first born of a new creation, is an image of Christ who was to do in reality what Noah had prefigured." He continues the comparison between Noah on the one hand, who was saved by the ark made of wood and the water that made it float ("water of the Flood from which a new humanity was born"), and on the other, the cross made of wood. He stresses the value of this symbolism and concludes by underlining the "spiritual and doctrinal wealth of the sacrament of the Flood" (sic).

There is much that one could say about such apologetical comparisons. We should always remember that they are commentaries on an event that it is not possible to defend as reality, either on a universal scale or in terms of the time in which the Bible places it. With a commentary such as Cardinal Daniélou's we are back in

the Middle Ages, where the text had to be accepted as it was and any discussion, other than conformist, was off the point.

It is nevertheless reassuring to find that prior to that age of imposed obscurantism, highly logical attitudes were adopted. One might mention those of Saint Augustine which proceed from his thought, that was singularly advanced for the age he lived in. At the time of the Fathers of the Church, there must have been problems of textual criticism because Saint Augustine raises them in his letter No. 82. The most typical of them is the following passage:

"It is solely to those books of Scripture which are called 'canonic' that I have learned to grant such attention and respect that I firmly believe that their authors have made no errors in writing them. When I encounter in these books a statement which seems to contradict reality, I am in no doubt that either the text (of my copy) is faulty, or that the translator has not been faithful to the original, or that my understanding is deficient."

It was inconceivable to Saint Augustine that a sacred text might contain an error. Saint Augustine defined very clearly the dogma of infallibility when, confronted with a passage that seemed to contradict the truth, he thought of looking for its cause, without excluding the hypothesis of a human fault. This is the attitude of a believer with a critical outlook. In Saint Augustine's day, there was no possibility of a confrontation between the Biblical text and science. An open-mindedness akin to his would today eliminate a lot of the difficulties raised by the confrontation of certain Biblical texts with scientific knowledge.

Present-day specialists, on the contrary, go to great trouble to defend the Biblical text from any accusation of error. In his introduction to Genesis, Father de Vaux explains the reasons compelling him to defend the text at all costs, even if, quite obviously, it is historically or scientifically unacceptable. He asks us not to view Biblical history "according to the rules of historical study observed by people today", as if the existence of several different ways of writing history was possible. History, when it is told in an inaccurate fashion, (as anyone will admit), becomes a historical novel. Here however, it does not have to comply with the standards established by our conceptions. The Biblical commentator rejects any verification of Biblical descriptions through geology, paleontology or pre-historical data. "The Bible is not answerable to any of these disciplines, and were one to confront it with the data obtained from these sciences, it would only lead to an unreal opposition or an artificial concordance." [13] One might point out that these reflections are made on what, in Genesis, is in no way in harmony with modern scientific data-in this case the first eleven chapters. When however, in the present day, a few descriptions have been perfectly verified, in this case certain episodes from the time of the patriarchs, the author does not fail to support the truth of the Bible with modern knowledge. "The doubt cast upon these descriptions should yield to the favorable witness that history and eastern archaeology bear them." [14] In other words, if science is useful in confirming the Biblical description, it is invoked, but if it invalidates the latter, reference to it is not permitted.

To reconcile the irreconcilable, i.e. the theory of the truth of the Bible with the inaccurate nature of certain facts reported in the descriptions in the Old Testament, modern theologians have applied their efforts to a revision of the classical concepts of truth. It lies outside the scope of this book to give a detailed expose of the subtle ideas that are developed at length in works dealing with the truth of the Bible; such as O. Loretz's work (1972) *What is the Truth of the Bible?* (*Quelle est la Vérité de la Bible?*) [15]. This judgment concerning science will have to suffice:

The author remarks that the Second Vatican Council "has avoided providing rules to distinguish between error and truth in the Bible. Basic considerations show that this is impossible, because the Church cannot determine the truth or otherwise of scientific methods in such a way as to decide in principle and on a general level the question of the truth of the Scriptures".

It is obvious that the Church is not in a position to make a pronouncement on the value of scientific 'method' as a means of access to knowledge. The point here is quite different. It is not a question of theories, but of firmly established facts. In our day and age, it is not necessary to be highly learned to know that the world was not created thirty-seven or thirty-eight centuries ago. We know that man did not appear then and that

the Biblical genealogies on which this estimate is based have been proven wrong beyond any shadow of a doubt. The author quoted here must be aware of this. His statements on science are only aimed at side-stepping the issue so that he does not have to deal with it the way he ought to.

The reminder of all these different attitudes adopted by Christian authors when confronted with the scientific errors of Biblical texts is a good illustration of the uneasiness they engender. It recalls the impossibility of defining a logical position other than by recognizing their human origins and the impossibility of acknowledging that they form part of a Revelation.

The uneasiness prevalent in Christian circles concerning the Revelation became clear at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) where it took no less than five drafts before there was any agreement on the final text, after three years of discussions. It was only then that "this painful situation threatening to engulf the Council" came to an end, to use His Grace Weber's expression in his introduction to the Conciliar Document No. 4 on the Revelation[16].

Two sentences in this document concerning the Old Testament (chap IV, page 53) describe the imperfections and obsolescence of certain texts in a way that cannot be contested:

"In view of the human situation prevailing before Christ's foundation of salvation, the Books of the Old Testament enable everybody to know who is God and who is man, and also the way in which God, in his justice and mercy, behaves towards men. These books, even though they contain material which is imperfect and obsolete, nevertheless bear witness to truly divine teachings."

There is no better statement than the use of the adjectives 'imperfect' and 'obsolete' applied to certain texts, to indicate that the latter are open to criticism and might even be abandoned; the principle is very clearly acknowledged.

This text forms part of a general declaration which was definitively ratified by 2,344 votes to 6; nevertheless, one might question this almost total unanimity. In actual fact, in the commentaries of the official document signed by His Grace Weber, there is one phrase in particular which obviously corrects the solemn affirmation of the council on the obsolescence of certain texts: "'Certain books of the Jewish Bible have a temporary application and have something imperfect in them.'"

'Obsolete', the expression used in the official declaration, is hardly a synonym for 'temporary application', to use the commentator's phrase. As for the epithet 'Jewish' which the latter curiously adds, it suggests that the conciliar text only criticized the version in Hebrew. This is not at all the case. It is indeed the Christian Old Testament alone that, at the Council, was the object of a judgment concerning the imperfection and obsolescence of certain parts.

Conclusions

The Biblical Scriptures must be examined without being embellished artificially with qualities one would like them to have. They must be seen objectively as they are. This implies not only a knowledge of the texts, but also of their history. The latter makes it possible to form an idea of the circumstances which brought about textual adaptations over the centuries, the slow formation of the collection that we have today, with its numerous subtractions and additions.

The above makes it quite possible to believe that different versions of the same description can be found in the Old Testament, as well as contradictions, historical errors, improbabilities and incompatibilities with

firmly established scientific data. They are quite natural in human works of a very great age. How could one fail to find them in the books written in the same conditions in which the Biblical text was composed?

At a time when it was not yet possible to ask scientific questions, and one could only decide on improbabilities or contradictions, a man of good sense, such as Saint Augustine, considered that God could not teach man things that did not correspond to reality. He therefore put forward the principle that it was not possible for an affirmation contrary to the truth to be of divine origin, and was prepared to exclude from all the sacred texts anything that appeared to him to merit exclusion on these grounds.

Later, at a time when the incompatibility of certain passages of the Bible with modern knowledge has been realized, the same attitude has not been followed. This refusal has been so insistent that a whole literature has sprung up, aimed at justifying the fact that, in the face of all opposition, texts have been retained in the Bible that have no reason to be there.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) has greatly reduced this uncompromising attitude by introducing reservations about the "Books of the Old Testament" which "contain material that is imperfect and obsolete". One wonders if this will remain a pious wish or if it will be followed by a change in attitude towards material which, in the Twentieth century, is no longer acceptable in the books of the Bible. In actual fact, save for any human manipulation, the latter were destined to be the "witness of true teachings coming from God".

The Gospels

Introduction

Many readers of the Gospels are embarrassed and even abashed when they stop to think about the meaning of certain descriptions. The same is true when they make comparisons between different versions of the same event found in several Gospels. This observation is made by Father Roguet in his book *Initiation to the Gospels* (Initiation à l'Evangile)[17]. With the wide experience he has gained in his many years of answering perturbed readers' letters in a Catholic weekly, he has been able to assess just how greatly they have been worried by what they have read. His questioners come from widely varying social and cultural backgrounds. He notes that their requests for explanations concern texts that are "considered abstruse, incomprehensible, if not contradictory, absurd or scandalous". There can be no doubt that a complete reading of the Gospels is likely to disturb Christians profoundly.

This observation is very recent: Father Roguet's book was published in 1973. Not so very long ago, the majority of Christians knew only selected sections of the Gospels that were read during services or commented upon during sermons. With the exception of the Protestants, it was not customary for Christians to read the Gospels in their entirety. Books of religious instruction only contained extracts; the *in extenso* text hardly circulated at all. At a Roman Catholic school I had copies of the works of Virgil and Plato, but I did not have the New Testament. The Greek text of this would nevertheless have been very instructive: it was only much later on that I realized why they had not set us translations of the holy writings of Christianity. The latter could have led us to ask our teachers questions they would have found it difficult to answer.

These discoveries, made if one has a critical outlook during a reading *in extens* of the Gospels, have led the Church to come to the aid of readers by helping them overcome their perplexity. "Many Christians need to learn how to read the Gospels", notes Father Roguet. Whether or not one agrees with the explanations he gives, it is greatly to the author's credit that he actually tackles these delicate problems. Unfortunately, it is not always like this in many writings on the Christian Revelation.

In editions of the Bible produced for widespread publication, introductory notes more often than not set out a collection of ideas that would tend to persuade the reader that the Gospels hardly raise any problems concerning the personalities of the authors of the various books, the authenticity of the texts and the truth of the descriptions. In spite of the fact that there are so many unknowns concerning authors of whose identity we are not at all sure, we find a wealth of precise information in this kind of introductory note. Often they present as a certainty what is pure hypothesis, or they state that such-and-such an evangelist was an eye-witness of the events, while specialist works claim the opposite. The time that elapsed between the end of Jesus' ministry and the appearance of the texts is drastically reduced. They would have one believe that these were written by one man taken from an oral tradition, when in fact specialists have pointed out adaptations to the texts. Of course, certain difficulties of interpretation are mentioned here and there, but they ride rough shod over glaring contradictions that must strike anyone who thinks about them. In the little glossaries one finds among the appendices complementing a reassuring preface, one observes how improbabilities, contradictions or blatant errors have been hidden or stifled under clever arguments of an apologetic nature. This disturbing state of affairs shows up the misleading nature of such commentaries.

The ideas to be developed in the coming pages will without doubt leave any readers still unaware of these problems quite amazed. Before going into detail however, I will provide an immediate illustration of my ideas with an example that seems to me quite conclusive.

Neither Matthew nor John speaks of Jesus's Ascension. Luke in his Gospel places it on the day of the Resurrection and forty days later in the Acts of the Apostles of which he is said to be the author. Mark mentions it (without giving a date) in a conclusion considered unauthentic today. The Ascension therefore has no solid scriptural basis. Commentators nevertheless approach this important question with incredible lightness.

A. Tricot, in his *Little Dictionary of the New Testament* (Petit Dictionnaire du Nouveau Testament) in the Crampon Bible, (1960 edition)[18], a work produced for mass publication, does not devote an entry to the Ascension. *The Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (Synopse des Quatre Evangiles) by Fathers Benoît and Boismard, teachers at the Biblical School of Jerusalem, (1972 edition)[19], informs us in volume II, pages 451 and 452, that the contradiction between Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles may be explained by a 'literary artifice': this is, to say the least, difficult to follow ! .

In all probability, Father Roguet in his *Initiation to the Gospel*, 1973, (pg. 187) has not been convinced by the above argument. The explanation he gives us is curious, to say the least:

"'Here, as in many similar cases, the problem only appears insuperable if one takes Biblical statements literally, and forgets their religious significance. It is not a matter of breaking down the factual reality into a symbolism which is inconsistent, but rather of looking for the theological intentions of those revealing these mysteries to us by providing us with facts we can apprehend with our senses and signs appropriate to our incarnate spirit.'"

How is it possible to be satisfied by an exegesis of this kind. Only a person who accepted everything unconditionally would find such apologetic set-phrases acceptable.

Another interesting aspect of Father Roguet's commentary is his admission that there are 'many similar cases'; similar, that is, to the Ascension in the Gospels. The problem therefore has to be approached as a whole, objectively and in depth. It would seem reasonable to look for an explanation by studying the conditions attendant upon the writing of the Gospels, or the religious atmosphere prevailing at the time. When adaptations of the original writings taken from oral traditions are pointed out, and we see the way texts handed down to us have been corrupted, the presence of obscure, incomprehensible, contradictory, improbable, and even absurd passages comes as much less of a surprise. The same may be said of texts which are incompatible with today's proven reality, thanks to scientific progress. Observations such as these denote the element of human participation in the writing and modification of the texts.

Admittedly, in the last few decades, objective research on the Scriptures has gained attention. In a recent book, *Faith in the Resurrection, Resurrection of Faith*[20] (Foi en la Resurrection, Resurrection de la foi), Father Kannengiesser, a professor at the Catholic Institute of Paris, outlines this profound change in the following terms: "The faithful are hardly aware that a revolution has taken place in methods of Biblical exegesis since the time of Pious XII"[21]. The 'Revolution' that the author mentions is therefore very recent. It is beginning to be extended to the teaching of the faithful, in the case of certain specialists at least, who are animated by this spirit of revival. "The overthrow of the most assured prospects of the pastoral tradition," the author writes, "has more or less begun with this revolution in methods of exegesis."

Father Kannengiesser warns that 'one should not take literally' facts reported about Jesus by the Gospels, because they are 'writings suited to an occasion' or 'to combat', whose authors 'are writing down the traditions of their own community about Jesus'. Concerning the Resurrection of Jesus, which is the subject of his book, he stresses that none of the authors of the Gospels can claim to have been an eye-witness. He intimates that, as far as the rest of Jesus's public life is concerned, the same must be true because, according to the Gospels, none of the Apostles-apart from Judas Iscariot-left Jesus from the moment he first followed Him until His last earthly manifestations.

We have come a long way from the traditional position, which was once again solemnly confirmed by the Second Vatican Council only ten years ago. This once again is resumed by modern works of popularization destined to be read by the faithful. Little by little the truth is coming to light however.

It is not easy to grasp, because the weight of such a bitterly defended tradition is very heavy indeed. To free oneself from it, one has to strike at the roots of the problem, i.e. examine first the circumstances that marked the birth of Christianity.

Historical Reminder Judeo-Christian and Saint Paul

The majority of Christians believe that the Gospels were written by direct witnesses of the life of Jesus and therefore constitute unquestionable evidence concerning the events highlighting His life and preachings. One wonders, in the presence of such guarantees of authenticity, how it is possible to discuss the teachings derived from them and how one can cast doubt upon the validity of the Church as an institution applying the general instructions Jesus Himself gave. Today's popular editions of the Gospels contain commentaries aimed at propagating these ideas among the general public.

The value the authors of the Gospels have as eye-witnesses is always presented to the faithful as axiomatic. In the middle of the Second century, Saint Justin did, after all, call the Gospels the 'Memoirs of the Apostles'. There are moreover so many details proclaimed concerning the authors that it is a wonder that one could ever doubt their accuracy. 'Matthew was a well-known character 'a customs officer employed at the tollgate or customs house at Capharnaum'; it is even said that he spoke Aramaic and Greek. Mark is also easily identifiable as Peter's colleague; there is no doubt that he too was an eye-witness. Luke is the 'dear physician' of whom Paul talks: information on him is very precise. John is the Apostle who was always near to Jesus, son of Zebedee, fisherman on the Sea of Galilee.

Modern studies on the beginnings of Christianity show that this way of presenting things hardly corresponds to reality. We shall see who the authors of the Gospels really were. As far as the decades following Jesus's mission are concerned, it must be understood that events did not at all happen in the way they have been said to have taken place and that Peter's arrival in Rome in no way laid the foundations for the Church. On the contrary, from the time Jesus left earth to the second half of the Second century, there was a struggle between two factions. One was what one might call Pauline Christianity and the other Judeo-Christianity. It was only very slowly that the first supplanted the second, and Pauline Christianity triumphed over Judeo-Christianity.

A large number of very recent works are based on contemporary discoveries about Christianity. Among them we find Cardinal Daniélou's name. In December 1967 he published an article in the review *Studies (Etudes)* entitled, '*A New Representation of the Origins of Christianity: Judeo-Christianity*'. (Une vision nouvelle des origines chrétiennes, le judéo-christianisme). Here he reviews past works, retraces its history and enables us to place the appearance of the Gospels in quite a different context from the one that emerges on reading accounts intended for mass publication. What follows is a condensed version of the essential points made in his article, including many quotations from it.

After Jesus's departure, the "little group of Apostles" formed a "Jewish sect that remained faithful to the form of worship practised in the Temple". However, when the observances of converts from paganism were added to them, a 'special system' was offered to them, as it were: the Council of Jerusalem in 49 A.D. exempted them from circumcision and Jewish observances; "many Judeo-Christians rejected this concession". This group was quite separate from Paul's. What is more, Paul and the Judeo-Christians were in conflict over the question of pagans who had turned to Christianity, (the incident of Antioch, 49 A.D.). "For Paul, the circumcision, Sabbath, and form of worship practised in the Temple were henceforth old fashioned, even for the Jews. Christianity was to free itself from its political-cum-religious adherence to Judaism and open itself to the Gentiles."

For those Judeo-Christians who remained 'loyal Jews,' Paul was a traitor. Judeo-Christian documents call him an 'enemy', accuse him of 'tactical double-dealing', . . . "Until 70 A.D., Judeo-Christianity represents the majority of the Church" and "Paul remains an isolated case". The head of the community at that time was James, a relation of Jesus. With him were Peter (at the beginning) and John. "James may be considered to represent the Judeo-Christian camp, which deliberately clung to Judaism as opposed to Pauline Christianity." Jesus's family has a very important place in the Judeo-Christian Church of Jerusalem. "James's successor was Simeon, son of Cleopas, a cousin of the Lord".

Cardinal Danielou here quotes Judeo-Christian writings which express the views on Jesus of this community which initially formed around the apostles: the Gospel of the Hebrews (coming from a Judeo-Christian community in Egypt), the writings of Clement: Homilies and Recognitions, 'Hypotyposeis', the Second Apocalypse of James, the Gospel of Thomas.[22] "It is to the Judeo-Christians that one must ascribe the oldest writings of Christian literature." Cardinal Daniélou mentions them in detail.

"It was not just in Jerusalem and Palestine that Judeo-Christianity predominated during the first hundred years of the Church. The Judeo-Christian mission seems everywhere to have developed before the Pauline mission. This is certainly the explanation of the fact that the letters of Paul allude to a conflict." They were the same adversaries he was to meet everywhere: in Galatia, Corinth, Colossae, Rome and Antioch.

The Syro-Palestinian coast from Gaza to Antioch was Judeo-Christian "'as witnessed by the Acts of the Apostles and Clementine writings". In Asia Minor, the existence of Judeo-Christians is indicated in Paul's letters to the Galatians and Colossians. Papias's writings give us information about Judeo-Christianity in Phrygia. In Greece, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians mentions Judeo-Christians, especially at Apollos. According to Clement's letter and the Shepherd of Hermas, Rome was an 'important centre'. For Suetonius and Tacitus, the Christians represented a Jewish sect. Cardinal Daniélou thinks that the first evangelization in Africa was Judeo-Christian. The Gospel of the Hebrews and the writings of Clement of Alexandria link up with this.

It is essential to know these facts to understand the struggle between communities that formed the background against which the Gospels were written. The texts that we have today, after many adaptations from the sources, began to appear around 70 A.D., the time when the two rival communities were engaged in a fierce struggle, with the Judeo-Christians still retaining the upper hand. With the Jewish war and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. the situation was to be reversed. This is how Cardinal Daniélou explains the decline:

"After the Jews had been discredited in the Empire, the Christians tended to detach themselves from them. The Hellenistic peoples of Christian persuasion then gained the upper hand. Paul won a posthumous victory. Christianity separated itself politically and sociologically from Judaism; it became the third people. All the same, until the Jewish revolt in 140 A.D., Judeo-Christianity continued to predominate culturally"

From 70 A.D. to a period sometime before 110 A.D. the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John were produced. They do not constitute the first written Christian documents: the letters of Paul date from well before them. According to O. Culmann, Paul probably wrote his letter to the Thessalonians in 50 A.D. He had probably disappeared several years prior to the completion of Mark's Gospel.

Paul is the most controversial figure in Christianity. He was considered to be a traitor to Jesus's thought by the latter's family and by the apostles who had stayed in Jerusalem in the circle around James. Paul created Christianity at the expense of those whom Jesus had gathered around him to spread his teachings. He had not known Jesus during his lifetime and he proved the legitimacy of his mission by declaring that Jesus, raised from the dead, had appeared to him on the road to Damascus. It is quite reasonable to ask what Christianity might have been without Paul and one could no doubt construct all sorts of hypotheses on this subject. As far as the Gospels are concerned however, it is almost certain that if this atmosphere of struggle between communities had not existed, we would not have had the writings we possess today. They appeared at a time of fierce struggle between the two communities. These 'combat writings', as Father Kannengiesser calls them, emerged from the multitude of writings on Jesus. These occurred at the time when Paul's style of Christianity won through definitively, and created its own collection of official texts. These texts constituted the 'Canon' which condemned and excluded as unorthodox any other documents that were not suited to the line adopted by the Church.

The Judeo-Christians have now disappeared as a community with any influence, but one still hears people talking about them under the general term of 'Judaistic'. This is how Cardinal Daniélou describes their disappearance:

"When they were cut off -from the Great Church, that gradually freed itself from its Jewish attachments, they petered out very quickly in the West. In the East however it is possible to find traces of them in the Third and Fourth Centuries A.D., especially in Palestine, Arabia, Transjordan, Syria and Mesopotamia. Others joined in the orthodoxy of the Great Church, at the same time preserving traces of Semitic culture; some of these still persist in the Churches of Ethiopia and Chaldea".

The Four Gospels. Sources and History.

In the writings that come from the early stages of Christianity, the Gospels are not mentioned until long after the works of Paul. It was not until the middle of the Second century A.D., after 140 A.D. to be precise, that accounts began to appear concerning a collection of Evangelic writings, In spite of this, "from the beginning of the Second century A.D., many Christian authors clearly intimate that they knew a. great many of Paul's letters." These observations are set out in the Introduction to the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible, New Testament* (Introduction à la Traduction oecuménique de la Bible, Nouveau Testament) edited 1972[23]. They are worth mentioning from the outset, and it is useful to point out here that the work referred to is the result of a collective effort which brought together more than one hundred Catholic and Protestant specialists.

The Gospels, later to become official, i.e. canonic, did not become known until fairly late, even though they were completed at the beginning of the Second century A.D. According to the *Ecumenical Translation*, stories belonging to them began to be quoted around the middle of the Second century A.D. Nevertheless, "it is nearly always difficult to decide whether the quotations come from written texts that the authors had next to them or if the latter were content to evoke the memory of fragments of the oral tradition."

"Before 140 A.D." we read in the commentaries this translation of the Bible contains, "there was, in any case, no account by which one might have recognised a collection of evangelic writings". This statement is the opposite of what A. Tricot writes (1960) in the commentary to his translation of the New Testament: "Very early on, from the beginning of the Second century A.D., it became a habit to say 'Gospel' meaning the books that Saint Justin around 150 A.D. had also called 'The Memoirs of the Apostles'." Unfortunately, assertions of this kind are sufficiently common for the public to have ideas on the date of the Gospels which are mistaken.

The Gospels did not form a complete whole 'very early on'; it did not happen until more than a century after the end of Jesus's mission. *The Ecumenical Translation of the Bible* estimates the date the four Gospels acquired the status of canonic literature at around 170 A.D.

Justin's statement which calls the authors 'Apostles' is not acceptable either, as we shall see.

As far as the date the Gospels were written is concerned, A. Tricot states that Matthew's, Mark's and Luke's Gospels were written before 70 A.D.: but this is not acceptable, except perhaps for Mark. Following many others, this commentator goes out of his way to present the authors of the Gospels as the apostles or the companions of Jesus. For this reason he suggests dates of writing that place them very near to the time Jesus lived. As for John, whom A. Tricot has us believe lived until roughly 100 A.D., Christians have always been used to seeing him depicted as being very near to Jesus on ceremonial occasions. It is very difficult however to assert that he is the author of the Gospel that bears his name. For A. Tricot, as for other commentators, the Apostle John (like Matthew) was the officially qualified witness of the facts he recounts, although the majority of critics do not support the hypothesis which says he wrote the fourth Gospel.

If however the four Gospels in question cannot reasonably be regarded as the 'Memoirs' of the apostles or companions of Jesus, where do they come from?

24. Pub. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1967

Culmann, in his book *The New Testament* (Le Nouveau Testament)[24], says of this that the evangelists were only the "spokesmen of the early Christian community which wrote down the oral tradition. For thirty or forty years, the Gospel had existed as an almost exclusively oral tradition: the latter only transmitted sayings and isolated narratives. The evangelists strung them together, each in his own way according to his own character and theological preoccupations. They linked up the narrations and sayings handed down by the prevailing tradition. The grouping of Jesus's sayings and likewise the sequence of narratives is made by the use of fairly vague linking phrases such as 'after this', 'when he had' etc. In other words, the 'framework' of the Synoptic Gospels[25] is of a purely literary order and is not based on history."

The same author continues as follows:

"It must be noted that the needs of preaching, worship and teaching, more than biographical considerations, were what guided the early community when it wrote down the tradition of the life of Jesus. The apostles illustrated the truth of the faith they were preaching by describing the events in the life of Jesus. Their sermons are what caused the descriptions to be written down. The sayings of Jesus were transmitted, in particular, in the teaching of the catechism of the early Church."

This is exactly how the commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible* (Traduction oecuménique de la Bible) describe the writing of the Gospels: the formation of an oral tradition influenced by the preachings of Jesus's disciples and other preachers; the preservation by preaching of this material, which is in actual fact found in the Gospels, by preaching, liturgy, and teaching of the faithful; the slender possibility of a concrete form given by writings to certain confessions of faith, sayings of Jesus, descriptions of the Passion for example; the fact that the evangelists resort to various written forms as well as data contained in the oral tradition. They resort to these to produce texts which "are suitable for various circles, which meet the needs of the Church, explain observations on the Scriptures, correct errors and even, on occasion, answer adversaries' objections. Thus the evangelists, each according to his own outlook, have collected and recorded in writing the material given to them by the oral tradition".

This position has been collectively adopted by more than one hundred experts in the exegesis of the New Testament, both Catholic and Protestant. It diverges widely from the line established by the Second Vatican Council in its dogmatic constitution on the Revelation drawn up between 1962 and 1965. This conciliar document has already been referred to once above, when talking of the Old Testament. The Council was able to declare of the latter that the books which compose it "contain material which is imperfect and obsolete", but it has not expressed the same reservations about the Gospels. On the contrary, as we read in the following.

"Nobody can overlook the fact that, among all the Scriptures, even those of the New Testament, the Gospels have a well-deserved position of superiority. This is by virtue of the fact that they represent the most pre-eminent witness to the life and teachings of the Incarnate Word, Our Saviour. At all times and in all places the Church has maintained and still maintains the apostolic origin of the four Gospels. What the apostles actually preached on Christ's orders, both they and the men in their following subsequently transmitted, with the divine inspiration of the Spirit, in writings which are the foundation of the faith, i.e. the fourfold Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John."

"Our Holy Mother, the Church, has firmly maintained and still maintains with the greatest constancy, that these four Gospels, which it unhesitatingly confirms are historically authentic, faithfully transmit what Jesus, Son Of God, actually did and taught during his life among men for their eternal salvation until the day when He was taken up into the heavens. . . . The sacred authors therefore composed the four Gospels in such a way as to always give us true and frank information on the life of Jesus".

This is an unambiguous affirmation of the fidelity with which the Gospels transmit the acts and sayings of Jesus.

There is hardly any compatibility between the Council's affirmation and what the authors quoted above claim. In particular the following:

The Gospels "*are not to be taken literally*" they are "*writings suited to an occasion*" or "*combat writings*". Their authors "*are writing down the traditions of their own community concerning Jesus*". (Father Kannengiesser).

The Gospels are texts which "are suitable for various circles, meet the needs of the Church, explain observations on the Scriptures, correct errors and even, on occasion, answer adversaries' objections. Thus,

the evangelists, each according to his own outlook, have collected and recorded in writing the material given to them by the oral tradition". (*Ecumenical Translation of the Bible*).

It is quite clear that we are here faced with contradictory statements: the declaration of the Council on the one hand, and more recently adopted attitudes on the other. According to the declaration of the Second Vatican Council, a faithful account of the actions and words of Jesus is to be found in the Gospels; but it is impossible to reconcile this with the existence in the text of contradictions, improbabilities, things which are materially impossible or statements which run contrary to firmly established reality.

If, on the other hand, one chooses to regard the Gospels as expressing the personal point of view of those who collected the oral traditions that belonged to various communities, or as writings suited to an occasion or combat-writings, it does not come as a surprise to find faults in the Gospels. All these faults are the sign that they were written by men in circumstances such as these. The writers may have been quite sincere, even though they relate facts without doubting their inaccuracy. They provide us with descriptions which contradict other authors' narrations, or are influenced by reasons of religious rivalry between communities. They therefore present stories about the life of Jesus from a completely different angle than their adversaries.

It has already been shown how the historical context is in harmony with the second approach to the Gospels. The data we have on the texts themselves definitively confirms it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

Matthew's is the first of the four Gospels as they appear in the New Testament. This position is perfectly justified by the fact that it is a prolongation, as it were, of the Old Testament. It was written to show that "Jesus fulfilled the history of Israel", as the commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible* note and on which we shall be drawing heavily. To do so, Matthew constantly refers to quotations from the Old Testament which show how Jesus acted as if he were the Messiah the Jews were awaiting.

This Gospel begins with a genealogy of Jesus[26]. Matthew traces it back to Abraham via David. We shall presently see the fault in the text that most commentators silently ignore. Matthew's obvious intention was nevertheless to indicate the general tenor of his work straight away by establishing this line of descendants. The author continues the same line of thought by constantly bringing to the forefront Jesus's attitude toward Jewish law, the main principles of which (praying, fasting, and dispensing charity) are summarized here.

Jesus addresses His teachings first and foremost to His own people. This is how He speaks to the twelve Apostles "go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans[27] but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10, 5-6). "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel". (Matthew 15, 24). At the end of his Gospel, in second place, Matthew extends the apostolic mission of Jesus's first disciples to all nations. He makes Jesus give the following order. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28, 19), but the primary destination must be the 'house of Israel'. A.

Tricot says of this Gospel, "Beneath its Greek garb, the flesh and bones of this book are Jewish, and so is its spirit; it has a Jewish feel and bears its distinctive signs".

On the basis of these observations alone, the origins of Matthew's Gospel may be placed in the tradition of a Judeo-Christian community. According to O. Culmann, this community "was trying to break away from Judaism while at the same time preserving the continuity of the Old Testament. The main preoccupations and the general tenor of this Gospel point towards a strained situation."

There are also political factors to be found in the text. The Roman occupation of Palestine naturally heightened the desire of this country to see itself liberated. They prayed for God to intervene in favour of the people He had chosen among all others, and as their omnipotent sovereign who could give direct support to the affairs of men, as He had already done many times in the course of history.

What sort of person was Matthew? Let us say straight away that he is no longer acknowledged to be one of Jesus's companions. A. Tricot nevertheless presents him as such in his commentary to the translation of the New Testament, 1960: "Matthew alias, Levi, was a customs officer employed at the tollgate or customs house at Capharnaum when Jesus called him to be one of His disciples." This is the opinion of the Fathers of the Church, Origen, Jerome and Epiphane. This opinion is no longer held today. One point which is uncontested is that the author is writing "for people who speak Greek, but nevertheless know Jewish customs and the Aramaic language."

It would seem that for the commentators of the Ecumenical Translation, the origins of this Gospel are as follows:

"It is normally considered to have been written in Syria, perhaps at Antioch (. . .), or in Phoenicia, because a great many Jews lived in these countries.[28] (. . .) we have indications of a polemic against the orthodox Judaism of the Synagogue and the Pharisees such as was manifested at the synagogal assembly at Jamina circa 80 A.D." In such conditions, there are many authors who date the first of the Gospels at about 80-90 A.D., perhaps also a little earlier. it is not possible to be absolutely definite about this . . . since we do not know the author's exact name, we must be satisfied with a few outlines traced in the Gospel itself. the author can be recognized by his profession. He is well-versed in Jewish writings and traditions. He knows, respects, but vigorously challenges the religious leaders of his people. He is a past master in the art of teaching and making Jesus understandable to his listeners. He always insists on the practical consequences of his teachings. He would fit fairly well the description of an educated Jew turned Christian; a householder "who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" as Matthew says (13,52). This is a long way from the civil servant at Capharnaum, whom Mark and Luke call Levi, and who had become one of the twelve Apostles . . .

Everyone agrees in thinking that Matthew wrote his Gospel using the same sources as Mark and Luke. His narration is, as we shall see, different on several essential points. In spite of this, Matthew borrowed heavily from Mark's Gospel although the latter was not one of Jesus's disciples (O. Culmann).

Matthew takes very serious liberties with the text. We shall see this when we discuss the Old Testament in relation to the genealogy of Jesus which is placed at the beginning of his Gospel.

He inserts into his book descriptions which are quite literally incredible. This is the adjective used in the work mentioned above by Father Kannengiesser referring to an episode in the Resurrection. the episode of the guard. He points out the improbability of the story referring to military guards at the tomb, "these Gentile soldiers" who "report, not to their hierarchical superiors, but to the high priests who pay them to tell lies". He adds however: "One must not laugh at him because Matthew's intention was extremely serious. In his own way he incorporates ancient data from the oral tradition into his written work. The scenario is nevertheless worthy of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.[29]"

Let us not forget that this opinion on Matthew comes from an eminent theologian teaching at the Catholic Institute of Paris (Institut Catholique de Paris).

Matthew relates in his narration the events accompanying the death of Jesus. They are another example of his imagination.

"And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many."

This passage from Matthew (27, 51-53) has no corresponding passage in the other Gospels. It is difficult to see how the bodies of the saints in question could have raised from the dead *at the time of Jesus's death* (according to the Gospels it was on the eve of the Sabbath) and only emerge from their tombs *after his resurrection* (according to the same sources on the day after the Sabbath).

The most notable improbability is perhaps to be found in Matthew. It is the most difficult to rationalize of all that the Gospel authors claim Jesus said. He relates in chapter 12, 38-40 the episode concerning Jonah's sign:

Jesus was among the scribes and pharisees who addressed him in the following terms:

"Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you. But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Jesus therefore proclaims that he will stay in the earth three days and three nights. So Matthew, along with Luke and Mark, place the death and burial of Jesus on the eve of the Sabbath. This, of course, makes the time spent in the earth three days (*treis êmeras* in the Greek text), but this period can only include two and not three nights (*treis nuktas* in the Greek text[30]).

Gospel commentators frequently ignore this episode. Father Roguet nevertheless points out this improbability when he notes that Jesus "only stayed in the tomb" three days (one of them complete) and two nights. He adds however that "it is a set expression and really means three days". It is disturbing to see commentators reduced to using arguments that do not contain any positive meaning. It would be much more satisfying intellectually to say that a gross error such as this was the result of a scribe's mistake!

Apart from these improbabilities, what mostly distinguishes Matthew's Gospel is that it is the work of a Judeo-Christian community in the process of breaking away from Judaism while remaining in line with the Old Testament. From the point of view of Judeo-Christian history it is very important.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

This is the shortest of the four Gospels. It is also the oldest, but in spite of this it is not a book written by an apostle. At best it was written by an apostle's disciple.

O. Culmann has written that he does not consider Mark to be a disciple of Jesus. The author nevertheless points out, to those who have misgivings about the ascription of this Gospel to the Apostle Mark, that "Matthew and Luke would not have used this Gospel in the way they did had they not known that it was indeed based on the teachings of an apostle". This argument is in no way decisive. O. Culmann backs up the reservations he expresses by saying that he frequently quotes from the New Testament the sayings of a certain 'John nicknamed Mark'. These quotations do not however mention the name of a Gospel author, and the text of Mark itself does not name any author.

The paucity of information on this point has led commentators to dwell on details that seem rather extravagant: using the pretext, for example, that Mark was the only evangelist to relate in his description of the Passion the story of the young man who had nothing but a linen cloth about his body and, when seized, left the linen cloth and ran away naked (Mark 14, 51-52), they conclude that the young man must have been Mark, "the faithful disciple who tried to follow the teacher" (Ecumenical Translation). Other commentators see in this "personal memory a sign of authenticity, an anonymous signature", which "proves that he was an eyewitness" (O. Culmann).

O. Culmann considers that "many turns of phrase corroborate the hypothesis that the author was of Jewish origin," but the presence of Latin expressions might suggest that he had written his Gospel in Rome. "He addresses himself moreover to Christians not living in Palestine and is careful to explain the Aramic expressions he uses."

Tradition has indeed tended to see Mark as Peter's companion in Rome. It is founded on the final section of Peter's first letter (always supposing that he was indeed the author) . Peter wrote in his letter. "The community which is at Babylon, which is likewise chosen, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark." "By Babylon, what is probably meant is Rome" we read in the commentary to the Ecumenical Translation. From this, the commentators then imagine themselves authorized to conclude that Mark, who was supposed to have been with Peter in Rome, was the Evangelist . . . One wonders whether it was not the same line of reasoning that led Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in circa 150 A.D., to ascribe this Gospel to Mark as 'Peter's interpreter' and the possible collaborator of Paul.

Seen from this point of view, the composition of Mark's Gospel could be placed after Peter's death, i.e. at between 65 and 70 A.D. for the Ecumenical Translation and circa 70 A.D. for O. Culmann.

The text itself unquestionably reveals a major flaw. it is written with a total disregard to chronology. Mark therefore places, at the beginning of his narration (1, 16-20), the episode of the four fishermen whom Jesus leads to follow him by simply saying "I will make you become fishers of men", though they do not even know Him. The evangelist shows, among other things, a complete lack of plausibility.

As Father Roguet has said, Mark is 'a clumsy writer', 'the weakest of all the evangelists'; he hardly knows how to write a narrative. The commentator reinforces his observation by quoting a passage about how the twelve Apostles were selected.

Here is the literal translation:

"And he went up into the hills, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him. And he made that the twelve were to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons; and he made the twelve and imposed the name Simon on Peter" (Mark, 3, 13-16).

He contradicts Matthew and Luke, as has already been noted above, with regard to the sign of Jonah. On the subject of signs given by Jesus to men in the course of His mission Mark (8, 11-13) describes an episode that is hardly credible:

"The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven, to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and said, 'Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.' And he left them, and getting into the boat again he departed to the other side."

There can be no doubt that this is an affirmation coming from Jesus Himself about his intention not to commit any act which might appear supernatural. Therefore the commentators of the Ecumenical Translation, who are surprised that Luke says Jesus will only give one sign (the sign of Jonah; see Matthew's Gospel) , consider it 'paradoxical' that Mark should say "no sign shall be given to this generation" seeing, as they note, the "miracles that Jesus himself gives as a sign" (Luke 7,22 and 11,20).

Mark's Gospel as a whole is officially recognised as being canonic. All the same, the final section of Mark's Gospel (16,19-20) is considered by modern authors to have been tacked on to the basic work: the Ecumenical Translation is quite explicit about this.

This final section is not contained in the two oldest complete manuscripts of the Gospels, the *Codex Vaticanus* and the *Codex Sinaiticus* that date from the Fourth century A.D. O. Culmann notes on this subject that: "More recent Greek manuscripts and certain versions at this point added a conclusion on appearances which is not drawn from Mark but from the other Gospels." In fact, the versions of this added ending are very numerous. In the texts there are long and short versions (both are reproduced in the Bible, Revised Standard Version, 1952). Sometimes the long version has some additional material.

Father Kannengiesser makes the following comments on the ending. "The last verses must have been suppressed when his work was officially received (or the popular version of it) in the community that guaranteed its validity. Neither Matthew, Luke or a *fortiori* John saw the missing section. Nevertheless, the gap was unacceptable. A long time afterwards, when the writings of Matthew, Luke and John, all of them similar, had been in circulation, a worthy ending to Mark was composed. Its elements were taken from sources throughout the other Gospels. It would be easy to recognise the pieces of the puzzle by enumerating Mark (16,9-20). One would gain a more concrete idea of the free way in which the literary genre of the evangelic narration was handled until the beginnings of the Second century A.D."

What a blunt admission is provided for us here, in the thoughts of a great theologian, that human manipulation exists in the texts of the Scriptures!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

For O. Culmann, Luke is a 'chronicler', and for Father Kannengiesser he is a 'true novelist'. In his prologue to Theophilus, Luke warns us that he, in his turn, following on from others who have written accounts concerning Jesus, is going to write a narrative of the same facts using the accounts and information of eyewitnesses-impling that he himself is not one-including information from the apostles' preachings. It is therefore to be a methodical piece of work which he introduces in the following terms:

"Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having informed myself about all things from their beginnings, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning things of which you have been informed."

From the very first line one can see all that separates Luke from the 'scribbler' Mark to whose work we have just referred. Luke's Gospel is incontestably a literary work written in classical Greek free from any barbarisms.

Luke was a cultivated Gentile convert to Christianity. His attitude towards the Jews is immediately apparent. As O. Culmann points out, Luke leaves out Mark's most Judaic verses and highlights the Jews' incredulity at Jesus's words, throwing into relief his good relations with the Samaritans, whom the Jews detested. Matthew, on the other hand, has Jesus ask the apostles to flee from them. This is just one of many striking examples of the fact that the evangelists make Jesus say whatever suits their own personal outlook. They probably do so with sincere conviction. They give us the version of Jesus's words that is adapted to the point of view of their own community. How can one deny in the face of such evidence that the Gospels are 'combat writings' or 'writings suited to an occasion', as has been mentioned already? The comparison between the general tone of Luke's Gospel and Matthew's is in this respect a good demonstration.

Who was Luke? An attempt has been made to identify him with the physician of the same name referred to by Paul in several of his letters. The Ecumenical Translation notes that "several commentators have found the medical occupation of the author of this Gospel confirmed by the precision with which he describes the sick". This assessment is in fact exaggerated out of all proportion. Luke does not properly speaking 'describe' things of this kind; "the vocabulary he uses is that of a cultivated man of his time". There was a Luke who was Paul's travelling companion, but was he the same person? O. Culmann thinks he was.

The date of Luke's Gospel can be estimated according to several factors: Luke used Mark's and Matthew's Gospels. From what we read in the Ecumenical Translation, it seems that he witnessed the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus's armies in 70 A.D. The Gospel probably dates from after this time. Present-day critics situate the time it was written at .circa 80-90 A.D., but several place it at an even earlier date.

The various narrations in Luke show important differences when compared to his predecessors. An outline of this has already been given. The Ecumenical Translation indicates them on pages 181 et seq. O. Culmann, in his book, *The New Testament (Le Nouveau Testament)* page 18, cites descriptions in Luke's Gospel that are not to be found anywhere else. And they are not about minor points of detail.

The descriptions of Jesus's childhood are unique to Luke's Gospel. Matthew describes Jesus's childhood differently from Luke, and Mark does not mention it at all.

Matthew and Luke both provide different genealogies of Jesus: the contradictions are so large and the improbabilities so great, from a scientific point of view, that a special chapter of this book has been devoted to the subject. It is possible to explain why Matthew, who was addressing himself to Jews, should begin the genealogy at Abraham, and include David in it, and that Luke, as a converted Gentile, should want to go back even farther. We shall see however that the two genealogies contradict each other from David onwards.

Jesus's mission is described differently on many points by Luke, Matthew and Mark.

An event of such great importance to Christians as the institution of the Eucharist gives rise to variations between Luke and the other two evangelists.[31] Father Roguet notes in his book *Initiation to the Gospel (Initiation à l'Evangile)* page 75, that the words used to institute the Eucharist are reported by Luke (22,19-24) in a form very different from the wording in Matthew (26,26-29) and in Mark (14,22-24) which is almost identical.

"On the contrary" he writes, "the wording transmitted by Luke is very similar to that evoked by Saint Paul" (First Letter to the Corinthians, 11,23-25) .

As we have seen, in his Gospel, Luke expresses ideas on the subject of Jesus's Ascension which contradict what he says in the Acts of the Apostles. He is recognized as their author and they form an integral part of the New Testament. In his Gospel he situates the Ascension on Easter Day, and in the Acts forty days later. We already know to what strange commentaries this contradiction has led Christian experts in exegesis.

Commentators wishing to be objective, such as those of the Ecumenical Translation of the Bible, have been obliged to recognise as a general rule the fact that for Luke "the main preoccupation was not to write facts corresponding to material accuracy". When Father Kannengiesser compares the descriptions in the Acts of the Apostles written by Luke himself with the description of similar facts on Jesus raised from the dead by Paul, he pronounces the following opinion on Luke: "Luke is the most sensitive and literary of the four evangelists, he has all the qualities of a true novelist".

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

John's Gospel is radically different from the three others; to such an extent indeed that Father Roguet in his book *Initiation to the Gospel (Initiation à l'Evangile)*, having commented on the other three, immediately evokes a startling image for the fourth. He calls it , different world'. It is indeed a unique book; different in the arrangement and choice of subject, description and speech; different in its style, geography, chronology; there are even differences in theological outlook (O. Culmann). Jesus's words are therefore differently recorded by John from the other evangelists: Father Roguet notes on this that whereas the synoptics record Jesus's words in a style that is "striking, much nearer to the oral style", in John all is meditation; to such an extent indeed that "one sometimes wonders if Jesus is still speaking or whether His ideas have not imperceptibly been extended by the Evangelist's own thoughts".

Who was the author? This is a highly debated question and extremely varying opinions have been expressed on this subject.

A. Tricot and Father Roguet belong to a camp that does not have the slightest misgivings: John's Gospel is the work of an eyewitness, its author is John, son of Zebedee and brother of James. Many details are known about this apostle and are set out in works for mass publication. Popular iconography puts him near Jesus, as in the Last Supper prior to the Passion. Who could imagine that John's Gospel was not the work of John the Apostle whose figure is so familiar?

The fact that the fourth Gospel was written so late is not a serious argument against this opinion. The definitive version was probably written around the end of the First century A.D. To situate the time it was written at sixty years after Jesus would be in keeping with an apostle who was very young at the time of Jesus and who lived to be almost a hundred.

Father Kannengiesser, in his study on the Resurrection, arrives at the conclusion that none of the New Testament authors, save Paul, can claim to have been eyewitnesses to Jesus's Resurrection. John nevertheless related the appearance to a number of the assembled apostles, of which he was probably a member, in the absence of Thomas (20,19-24), then eight days later to the full group of apostles (20,25-29).

O. Culmann in his work *The New Testament* does not subscribe to this view.

The *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible* states that the majority of critics do not accept the hypothesis that the Gospel was written by John, although this possibility cannot be entirely ruled out. Everything points however towards the fact that the text we know today had several authors: "It is probable that the Gospel as it stands today was put into circulation by the author's disciples who added chapter 21 and very likely several annotations (i.e. 4,2 and perhaps 4,1; 4,44; 7,37b; 11,2; 19,35). With regard to the story of the adulterous woman (7,53-8,11), everyone agrees that it is a fragment of unknown origin inserted later (but nevertheless belonging to canonic Scripture)". Passage 19,35 appears as a 'signature' of an 'eyewitness' (O. Culmann), the only explicit signature in the whole of John's Gospel; but commentators believe that it was probably added later.

O. Culmann thinks that latter additions are obvious in this Gospel; such as chapter 21 which is probably the work of a "disciple who may well have made slight alterations to the main body of the Gospel".

It is not necessary to mention all the hypotheses suggested by experts in exegesis. The remarks recorded here made by the most eminent Christian writers on the questions of the authorship of the fourth Gospel are sufficient to show the extent of the confusion reigning on the subject of its authorship.

The historical value of John's stories has been contested to a great extent. The discrepancy between them and the other three Gospels is quite blatant. O. Culman offers an explanation for this; he sees in John a different theological point of view from the other evangelists. This aim "directs the choice of stories from the Logia[32] recorded, as well as the way in which they are reproduced . . . Thus the author often prolongs the lines and makes the historical Jesus say what the Holy Spirit Itself revealed to Him". This, for the exegete in question, is the reason for the discrepancies.

It is of course quite conceivable that John, who was writing after the other evangelists, should have chosen certain stories suitable for illustrating his own theories. One should not be surprised by the fact that certain descriptions contained in the other Gospels are missing in John. The *Ecumenical Translation* picks out a certain number of such instances (page 282). Certain gaps hardly seem credible however, like the fact that the Institution of the Eucharist is not described. It is unthinkable that an episode so basic to Christianity, one indeed that was to be the mainstay of its liturgy, i.e. the mass, should not be mentioned by John, the most pre-eminently meditative evangelist. The fact is, he limits himself, in the narrative of the supper prior to the Passion, to simply describing the washing of the disciples' feet, the prediction of Judas's betrayal and Peter's denial.

In contrast to this, there are stories which are unique to John and not present in the other three. The Ecumenical Translation mentions these (page 283). Here again, one could infer that the three authors did not

see the importance in these episodes that John saw in them. It is difficult however not to be taken aback when one finds in John a description of the appearance of Jesus *raised from the dead* to his disciples beside the Sea of Tiberias (John 21,1-14). The description is nothing less than the reproduction (with numerous added details) of the miracle catch of fish which Luke (5,1-11) presents as an episode that occurred *during Jesus's life*. In his description Luke alludes to the presence of the Apostle John who, as tradition has it, was the evangelist. Since this description in John's Gospel forms part of chapter 21, agreed to be a later addition, one can easily imagine that the reference to John's name in Luke could have led to its artificial inclusion in the fourth Gospel. The necessity of transforming a description from Jesus's life to a posthumous description in no way prevented the evangelical text from being manipulated.

Another important point on which John's Gospel differs from the other three is in the duration of Jesus's mission. Mark, Matthew and Luke place it over a period of one year. John spreads it over two years. O. Culmann notes this fact. On this subject the Ecumenical Translation expresses the following .

"The synoptics describe a long period in Galilee followed by a march that was more or less prolonged towards Judea, and finally a brief stay in Jerusalem. John, on the other hand, describes frequent journeys from one area to another and mentions a long stay in Judea, especially in Jerusalem (1,19-51; 2,13-3,36; 5,1-47; 14,20-31). He mentions several Passover celebrations (2,13; 5,1; 6,4; 11,55) and thus suggests a ministry that lasted more than two years".

Which one of them should one believe-Mark, Matthew, Luke or John?

SOURCES OF THE GOSPELS

The general outline that has been given here of the Gospels and which emerges from a critical examination of the texts tends to make one think of a literature which is "disjointed, with a plan that lacks continuity" and "seemingly insuperable contradictions". These are the terms used in the judgement passed on them by the commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible*. It is important to refer to their authority because the consequences of an appraisal of this subject are extremely serious. It has already been seen how a few notions concerning the religious history of the time when the Gospels were written helped to explain certain disconcerting aspects of this literature apparent to the thoughtful reader. It is necessary to continue, however, and ascertain what present-day works can tell us about the sources the Evangelists drew on when writing their texts. It is also interesting to see whether the history of the texts once they were established can help to explain certain aspects they present today.

The problem of sources was approached in a very simplistic fashion at the time of the Fathers of the Church. In the early centuries of Christianity, the only source available was the Gospel that the complete manuscripts provided first, i.e. Matthew's Gospel. The problem of sources only concerned Mark and Luke because John constituted a quite separate case. Saint Augustine held that Mark, who appears second in the traditional order of presentation, had been inspired by Matthew and had summarized his work. He further considered that Luke, who comes third in the manuscripts, had used data from both; his prologue suggests this, and has already been discussed.

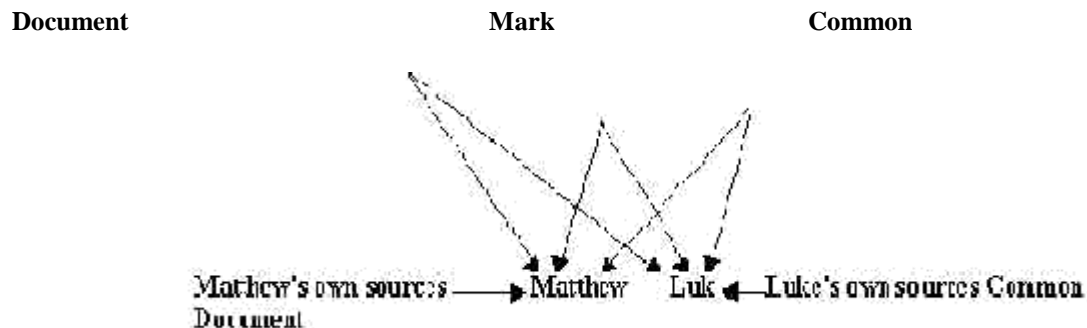
The experts in exegesis at this period were as able as we are to estimate the degree of corroboration between the texts and find a large number of verses common to two or three synoptics. Today, the commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible* provide the following figures:

verses common to all three synoptics -----	330
verses common to Mark and Matthew -----	178
verses common to Mark and Luke -----	100
verses common to Matthew and Luke -----	230

The verses unique to each of the first three Gospels are as follows: Matthew 330, Mark 53, and Luke 500.

From the Fathers of the Church until the end of the Eighteenth century A.D., one and a half millenia passed without any new problems being raised on the sources of the evangelists: people continued to follow tradition. It was not until modern times that it was realized, on the basis of these data, how each evangelist had taken material found in the others and compiled his own specific narration guided by his own personal views. Great weight was attached to actual collection of material for the narration. It came from the oral traditions of the communities from which it originated on the one hand, and from a common written Aramaic source that has not been rediscovered on the other. This written source could have formed a compact mass or have been composed of many fragments of different narrations used by each evangelist to construct his own original work.

More intensive studies in circa the last hundred years have led to theories which are more detailed and in time will become even more complicated. The first of the modern theories is the so-called 'Holtzmann Two Sources Theory', (1863). O. Culmann and the Ecumenical Translation explain that, according to this theory, Matthew and Luke may have been inspired by Mark on the one hand and on the other by a common document which has since been lost. The first two moreover each had his own sources. This leads to the following diagram:



Culmann criticises the above on the following points:

1. Mark's work, used by both Luke and Matthew, was probably not the author's Gospel but an earlier version.
2. The diagram does not lay enough emphasis on the oral tradition. This appears to be of paramount importance because it alone preserved Jesus's words and the descriptions of his mission during a period of thirty or forty years, as each of the Evangelists was only the spokesman for the Christian community which wrote down the oral tradition.

This is how it is possible to conclude that the Gospels we possess today are a reflection of what the early Christian communities knew of Jesus's life and ministry. They also mirror their beliefs and theological ideas, of which the evangelists were the spokesmen.

The latest studies in textual criticism on the sources of the Gospels have clearly shown an even more complicated formation process of the texts. A book by Fathers Benoit and Boismard, both professors at the Biblical School of Jerusalem (1972-1973), called the *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (Synopse des quatres Evangiles) stresses the evolution of the text in stages parallel to the evolution of the tradition. This implies the consequences set out by Father Benoit in his introduction to Father Boismard's part of the work. He presents them in the following terms:

"(. . .) the wording and form of description that result from a long evolution of tradition are not as authentic as in the original. some readers of this work will perhaps be surprised or embarrassed to learn that certain of Jesus's sayings, parables, or predictions of His destiny were not expressed in the way we read them today, but were altered and adapted by those who transmitted them to us. This

may come as a source of amazement and even scandal to those not used to this kind of historical investigation."

The alterations and adaptations to the texts made by those transmitting them to us were done in a way that Father Boismard explains by means of a highly complex diagram. It is a development of the so-called 'Two Sources Theory', and is the product of examination and comparison of the texts which it is not possible to summarize here. Those readers who are interested in obtaining further details should consult the original work published by Les Editions du Cerf, Paris.

Four basic documents-A, B, C and Q-represent the original sources of the Gospels (see general diagram).
Page 76.

Document A comes from a Judeo-Christian source. Matthew and Mark were inspired by it.
Document B is a reinterpretation of document A, for use in Pagan-cum-Christian churches: all the evangelists were inspired by it except Matthew.
Document C inspired Mark, Luke and John.
Document Q constitutes the majority of sources common to Matthew and Luke; it is the 'Common Document' in the 'Two Sources' theory referred to earlier.

None of these basic documents led to the production of the definitive texts we know today. Between them and the final version lay the intermediate versions: Intermediate Matthew, Intermediate Mark, Intermediate Luke and Intermediate John. These four intermediate documents were to lead to the final versions of the four Gospels, as well as to inspire the final corresponding versions of other Gospels. One only has to consult the diagram to see the intricate relationships the author has revealed.

The results of this scriptural research are of great importance. They show how the Gospel texts not only have a history (to be discussed later) but also a 'pre-history', to use Father Boismard's expression. What is meant is that before the final versions appeared, they underwent alterations at the Intermediate Document stage. Thus it is possible to explain, for example, how a well-known story from Jesus's life, such as the miracle catch of fish, is shown in Luke to be an event that happened during His life, and in John to be one of His appearances after His Resurrection.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above is that when we read the Gospel, we can no longer be at all sure that we are reading Jesus's word. Father Benoit addresses himself to the readers of the Gospel by warning them and giving them the following compensation: "If the reader is obliged in more than one case to give up the notion of hearing Jesus's voice directly, he still hears the voice of the Church and he relies upon it as the divinely appointed interpreter of the Master who long ago spoke to us on earth and who now speaks to us in His glory".

How can one reconcile this formal statement of the inauthenticity of certain texts with the phrase used in the dogmatic constitution on Divine Revelation by the Second Vatican Council assuring us to the contrary, i.e. the faithful transmission of Jesus's words: "These four Gospels, which it (the Church) unhesitatingly confirms are historically authentic, faithfully transmit what Jesus, Son of God, actually did and taught during his life among men for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up into the heavens"?

It is quite clear that the work of the Biblical School of Jerusalem flatly contradicts the Council's declaration.

M. E. BOISMARD
SYNOPSIS OF THE FOUR GOSPELS[1]
GENERAL DIAGRAM
(1) Synopse des quatre Evangiles

HISTORY OF THE TEXTS

One would be mistaken in thinking that once the Gospels were written they constituted the basic Scriptures of the newly born Christianity and that people referred to them the same way they referred to the Old Testament. At that time, the foremost authority was the oral tradition as a vehicle for Jesus's words and the teachings of the apostles. The first writings to circulate were Paul's letters and they occupied a prevalent position long before the Gospels. They were, after all, written several decades earlier.

It has already been shown, that contrary to what certain commentators are still writing today, before 140 A.D. there was no witness to the knowledge that a collection of Gospel writings existed. It was not until circa 170 A.D. that the four Gospels acquired the status of canonic literature.

In the early days of Christianity, many writings on Jesus were in circulation. They were not subsequently retained as being worthy of authenticity and the Church ordered them to be hidden, hence their name 'Apocrypha'. Some of the texts of these works have been well preserved because they "benefitted from the fact that they were generally valued", to quote the Ecumenical Translation. The same was true for the Letter of Barnabas, but unfortunately others were "more brutally thrust aside" and only fragments of them remain. They were considered to be the messengers of error and were removed from the sight of the faithful. Works such as the Gospels of the Nazarenes, the Gospels of the Hebrews and the Gospels of the Egyptians, known through quotations taken from the Fathers of the Church, were nevertheless fairly closely related to the canonic Gospels. The same holds good for Thomas's Gospel and Barnabas's Gospel.

Some of these apocryphal writings contain imaginary details, the product of popular fantasy. Authors of works on the Apocrypha also quote with obvious satisfaction passages which are literally ridiculous. Passages such as these are however to be found in *all* the Gospels. One has only to think of the imaginary description of events that Matthew claims took place at Jesus's death. It is possible to find passages lacking seriousness in all the early writings of Christianity: One must be honest enough to admit this.

The abundance of literature concerning Jesus led the Church to make certain excisions while the latter was in the process of becoming organized. Perhaps a hundred Gospels were suppressed. Only four were retained and put on the official list of neo-Testament writings making up what is called the 'Canon'.

In the middle of the Second century A.D., Marcion of Sinope put heavy pressure on the ecclesiastic authorities to take a stand on this. He was an ardent enemy of the Jews and at that time rejected the whole of the Old Testament and everything in writings produced after Jesus that seemed to him too close to the Old Testament or to come from the Judeo-Christian tradition. Marcion only acknowledged the value of Luke's Gospel because, he believed Luke to be the spokesman of Paul and his writings.

The Church declared Marcion a heretic and put into its canon all the Letters of Paul, but included the other Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They also added several other works such as the Acts of the Apostles. The official list nevertheless varies with time during the first centuries of Christianity. For a while, works that were later considered not to be valid (i.e. Apocrypha) figured in it, while other works contained in today's New Testament Canon were excluded from it at this time. These hesitations lasted until the Councils of Hippo Regius in 393 and Carthage in 397. The four Gospels always figured in it however.

One may join Father Boismard in regretting the disappearance of a vast quantity of literature declared apocryphal by the Church although it was of historical interest. The above author indeed gives it a place in his *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* alongside that of the official Gospels. He notes that these books still existed in libraries near the end of the Fourth century A.D.

This was the century that saw things put into serious order. The oldest manuscripts of the Gospels date from this period. Documents prior to this, i.e. papyri from the Third century A.D. and one possibly dating from the Second, only transmit fragments to us. The two oldest parchment manuscripts are Greek, Fourth century A.D. They are the *Codex Vaticanus*, preserved in the Vatican Library and whose place of discovery is unknown, and the *Codex Sinaiticus*, which was discovered on Mount Sinai and is now preserved in the British Museum, London. The second contains two apocryphal works.

According to the Ecumenical Translation, two hundred and fifty other known parchments exist throughout the world, the last of these being from the Eleventh century A.D. "Not all the copies of the New Testament that have come down to us are identical" however. "On the contrary, it is possible to distinguish differences of varying degrees of importance between them, but however important they may be, there is always a large number of them. Some of these only concern differences of grammatical detail, vocabulary or word order. Elsewhere however, differences between manuscripts can be seen which affect the meaning of whole passages". If one wishes to see the extent of textual differences, one only has to glance through the *Novum Testamentum Graece*.^[33] This work contains a so-called 'middle-of-the-road' Greek text. It is a text of synthesis with notes containing all the variations found in the different versions.

The authenticity of a text, and of even the most venerable manuscript, is always open to debate. The *Codex Vaticanus* is a good example of this. The facsimile reproductions edited by the Vatican City, 1965, contains an accompanying note from its editors informing us that "several centuries after it was copied (believed to have been in circa the Tenth or Eleventh century), a scribe inked over all the letters except those he thought were a mistake". There are passages in the text where the original letters in light brown still show through, contrasting visibly with the rest of the text which is in dark brown. There is no indication that it was a faithful restoration. The note states moreover that "the different hands that corrected and annotated the manuscript over the centuries have not yet been definitively discerned; a certain number of corrections were undoubtedly made when the text was inked over." In all the religious manuals the text is presented as a Fourth century copy. One has to go to sources at the Vatican to discover that various hands may have altered the text centuries later.

One might reply that other texts may be used for comparison, but how does one choose between variations that change the meaning? It is a well known fact that a very old scribe's correction can lead to the definitive reproduction of the corrected text. We shall see further on how a single word in a passage from John concerning the Paraclete radically alters its meaning and completely changes its sense when viewed from a theological point of view.

O. Culmann, in his book, *The New Testament*, writes the following on the subject of variations:

"Sometimes the latter are the result of inadvertant flaws: the copier misses a word out, or conversely writes it twice, or a whole section of a sentence is carelessly omitted because in the manuscript to be copied it appeared between two identical words. Sometimes it is a matter of deliberate corrections, either the copier has taken the liberty of correcting the text according to his own ideas or he has tried to bring it into line with a parallel text in a more or less skilful attempt to reduce the number of discrepancies. As, little by little, the New Testament writings broke away from the rest of early Christian literature, and came to be regarded as Holy Scripture, so the copiers became more and more hesitant about taking the same liberties as their predecessors: they thought they were copying the authentic text, but in fact wrote down the variations. Finally, a copier sometimes wrote annotations in the margin to explain an obscure passage. The following copier, thinking that the sentence he found in the margin had been left out of the passage by his predecessor, thought it necessary to include the margin notes in the text. This process often made the new text even more obscure."

The scribes of some manuscripts sometimes took exceedingly great liberties with the texts. This is the case of one of the most venerable manuscripts after the two referred to above, the Sixth century *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis*. The scribe probably noticed the difference between Luke's and Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, so he put Matthew's genealogy into his copy of Luke, but as the second contained fewer names than the first, he padded it out with extra names (without balancing them up).

Is it possible to say that the Latin translations, such as Saint Jerome's Sixth century Vulgate, or older translations (*Vetus Italia*), or Syriac and Coptic translations are any more faithful than the basic Greek manuscripts? They might have been made from manuscripts older than the ones referred to above and subsequently lost to the present day. We just do not know.

It has been possible to group the bulk of these versions into families all bearing a certain number of common traits. According to O. Culmann, one can define:

--a so-called Syrian text, whose constitution could have led to the majority of the oldest Greek manuscripts; this text was widely disseminated throughout Europe from the Sixteenth century A.D. onwards thanks to printing. the specialists say that it is probably the worst text.

--a so-called Western text, with old Latin versions and the *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis* which is in both Greek and Latin; according to the Ecumenical Translation, one of its characteristics is a definite tendency to provide explanations, paraphrases, inaccurate data and 'harmonizations'.

--the so-called Neutral text, containing the *Codex Vaticanus* and the *Codex Sinaiticus*, is said to have a fairly high level of purity; modern editions of the New Testament readily follow it, although it too has its flaws (Ecumenical Translation).

All that modern textual criticism can do in this respect is to try and reconstitute "a text which has the most likelihood of coming near to the original. In any case, there can be no hope of going back to the original text itself." (Ecumenical Translation)

The Gospels and Modern Science. The General Genealogies of Jesus.

The Gospels contain very few passages which give rise to a confrontation with modern scientific data.

Firstly however, there are many descriptions referring to miracles which hardly lend themselves to scientific comment. The miracles concern people-the healing of the sick (the insane, blind, paralytic ; the healing of lepers, resurrection of Lazarus) as well as the purely material phenomena that lie outside the laws of nature (the description of Jesus walking on water that held him up, the changing of the water into wine). Sometimes a natural phenomenon is seen from an unusual angle by virtue of the fact that the time element is very short: the immediate calming of the storm, the instantaneous withering of the fig tree, the miracle catch of fish, as if all the fish in the sea had come together at exactly the place where the nets were cast.

God intervenes in His Omnipotent Power in all these episodes. One need not be surprised by what He is able to achieve; by human standards it is stupendous, but for Him it is not. This does not at all mean that a believer should forget science. A belief in divine miracles and in science is quite compatible: one is on a divine scale, the other on a human one.

Personally, I am very willing to believe that Jesus cured a leper, but I cannot accept the fact that a text is declared authentic and inspired by God when I read that only twenty generations existed between the first man and Abraham. Luke says this in his Gospel (3, 23-28). We shall see in a moment the reasons that show why Luke's text, like the Old Testament text on the same theme, is quite simply a product of human imagination.

The Gospels (like the Qur'an) give us the same description of Jesus's biological origins. The formation of Jesus in the maternal uterus occurred in circumstances which lay outside the laws of nature common to all human beings. The ovule produced by the mother's ovary did not need to join with a spermatozoon, which should have come from his father, to form the embryo and hence a viable infant. The phenomenon of the birth of a normal individual without the fertilizing action of the male is called 'parthenogenesis'. In the animal kingdom, parthenogenesis can be observed under certain conditions. This is true for various insects, certain invertebrates and, very occasionally, a select breed of bird. By way of experiment, it has been possible, for example, in certain mammals (female rabbits), to obtain the beginnings of a development of the ovule into an embryo at an extremely rudimentary stage without any intervention of spermatozoon. It was not possible to go any further however and an example of complete parthenogenesis, whether experimental or natural, is

unknown. Jesus is an unique case. Mary was a virgin mother. She preserved her virginity and did not have any children apart from Jesus. Jesus is a biological exception.[34]

THE GENEALOGIES OF JESUS.

The two genealogies contained in Matthew's and Luke's Gospels give rise to problems of verisimilitude, and conformity with scientific data, and hence authenticity. These problems are a source of great embarrassment to Christian commentators because the latter refuse to see in them what is very obviously the product of human imagination. The authors of the Sacerdotal text of Genesis, Sixth century B.C., had already been inspired by imagination for their genealogies of the first men. It again inspired Matthew and Luke for the data they did not take from the Old Testament.

One must straight away note that the male genealogies have absolutely no relevance to Jesus. Were one to give a genealogy to Mary's only son, who was without a biological father, it would have to be the genealogy of his mother Mary.

Here is the text of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, 1952:

The genealogy according to Matthew is at the beginning of his Gospel:

Abraham	was the father of	Isaac
Isaac	was the father of	Jacob
Jacob	was the father of	Judah and his brothers
Judah	was the father of	Perez and Zerah by Tamar
Perez	was the father of	Hezron
Hezron	was the father of	Ram
Ram	was the father of	Amminadab
Amminadab	was the father of	Nahshon
Nahshon	was the father of	Salmon
Salmon	was the father of	Boaz by Rahab
Boaz	was the father of	Obed by Ruth
Obed	was the father of	Jesse
Jesse	was the father of	David the king
David	was the father of	Solomon by the wife of Uriah
Solomon	was the father of	Rehoboam
Rehoboam	was the father of	Abijah
Abijah	was the father of	Asa
Asa	was the father of	Jehoshaphat
Jehoshaphat	was the father of	Joram
Joram	was the father of	Uzziah
Uzziah	was the father of	Jotham
Jotham	was the father of	Ahaz
Ahaz	was the father of	Hezekiah
Hezekiah	was the father of	Manasseh
Manasseh	was the father of	Amos
	was the father of	Josiah
	was the father of	Jechoniah and his brothers

Amos		
Josiah	deportation to Babylon.	
	deportation to Babylon:	Shealtiel
at the time of the		Zerubbabel
After the	was the father of	Abiud
	was the father of	Eliakim
Jechoniah	was the father of	Azor
Shealtiel	was the father of	Zadok
Zerubbabel	was the father of	Achim
Abiud	was the father of	Eliud
Eliakim	was the father of	Eleazar
Azor	was the father of	Matthan
Zadok	was the father of	Jacob
Achim	was the father of	Joseph the husband of Mary
Eliud	was the father of	
Eleazar	was the father of	
Matthan	of whom Jesus was born, who was called	
Jacob	Christ	

"THE BOOK OF THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF DAVID, THE SON OF ABRAHAM.

So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations".
(Matthew, I, 1-17)

The genealogy given by Luke (3, 23-38) is different from Matthew. The text reproduced here is from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible:

"Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Ami, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God."

The genealogies appear more clearly when presented in two tables, one showing the genealogy before David and the other after him.

GENEALOGY OF JESUS, BEFORE DAVID

According to Luke	According to Marthew
<p> Adam .1 Seth .2 Enos .3 Cainan .4 Mahalaleel .5 Jared .6 Enoch .7 Methuselah .8 Lamech .9 Noah .10 Shem .11 Arphaxad .12 Cainan .13 Shelah .14 Eber .15 Peleg .16 Reu .17 Serug .18 Nahor .19 Terah .20 Abraham .21 Isaac .22 Jacob .23 Judah .24 Perez .25 Hezron .26 Arni .27 Admin .28 Amminadab .29 Nahshon .30 Sala .31 Boaz .32 Obed .33 Jesse .34 David .35 </p>	<p> Matthew does not mention any name before Abraham. </p> <p> Abraham .1 Isaac .2 Jacob .3 Judah .4 Perez .5 Hezron .6 Ram .7 Amminadab .8 Nahshon .9 Salmon .10 Boaz .11 Obed .12 Jesse .13 David .14 </p>

GENEALOGY OF JESUS, AFTER DAVID

According to Luke	According to Matthew
35 David 36 Nathan 37 Mattatha 38 Menna 39 Melea 40 Eliakim 41 Jonam 42 Joseph 43 Judah 44 Simeon 45 Levi 46 Matthat 47 Jorim 48 Eliezer 49 Joshua 50 Er 51 Elmadam 52 Cosam 53 Addi 54 Melchi 55 Neri 56 Shealtiel 57 Zerubbabel 58 Rhesa 59 Joanan 60 Joda 61 Josech 62 Semein 63 Mattathias 64 Maath 65 Naggai 66 Esli 67 Nahum 68 Amos 69 Mattathias 70 Joseph 71 Jannai 72 Melchi 73 Levi 74 Matthat 75 Heli 76 Joseph 77 Jesus	14 David 15 Solomon 16 Rehoboam 17 Abijah 18 Am 19 Jehoshaphat 20 Joram 21 Uzziah 22 Jotham 23 Ahaz 24 Hezekiah 25 Manasseh 26 Amos 27 Josiah 28 Jechoniah Deportation to Babylon 29 Shealtiel 30 Zerubbabel 31 Abiud 32 Eliakim 33 Azor 34 Zadok 35 Achim 36 Eliud 37 Eleazar 38 Matthan 39 Jacob 40 Joseph 41 Jesus

VARIATIONS IN THE MANUSCRIPTS AND
IN RELATION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Apart from variations in spelling, the following must be mentioned:

a) *Matthew's Gospel*

The genealogy has disappeared from the *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis*, a very important Six century manuscript in both Greek and Latin. It has completely disappeared from the Greek text and also a large part of the Latin text. It may quite simply be that the first pages were lost.

One must note here the great liberties Matthew has taken with the Old Testament. He has pared down the genealogies for the sake of a strange numerical demonstration (which, in the end, he does not give, as we shall see).

b) *Luke's Gospel*

1.-Before Abraham: Luke mentions 20 names; the Old Testament only mentions 19 (see table of Adam's descendants in the Old Testament section of this work). After Arphaxad (No. 12) , Luke has added a person called Cainan (No. 13), who is not mentioned in Genesis as the son of Arphaxad.

2.-From Abraham to David: 14 to 16 names are found according to the manuscripts.

3.-From David to Jesus.

The most important variation is the *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis* which attributes to Luke a whimsical genealogy taken from Matthew and to which the scribe has added five names. Unfortunately, the genealogy of Matthew's Gospel has disappeared from this manuscript, so that comparison is no longer possible.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE TEXTS.

We are here faced with two different genealogies having one essential point in common, i.e. they both pass via Abraham and David. To make this examination easier, we shall separate the whole into three critical sections:

- From Adam to Abraham.
- From Abraham to David.
- From David to Jesus.

1. The Period from Adam to Abraham

Matthew began his genealogy with Abraham so we are not concerned with his text here. Luke alone provides information on Abraham's ancestors going back to Adam: 20 names, 19 of which are to be found in Genesis (chapters 4, 5 and 11), as has already been stated.

Is it possible to believe that only 19 or 20 generations of human beings existed before Abraham? The problem has been examined in the discussion of the Old Testament. If one looks at the table of Adam's descendants, based on Genesis and giving figures for the time element contained in the Biblical text, one can see that roughly nineteen centuries passed between man's appearance on earth and the birth of Abraham. Today it is estimated that Abraham Was alive in circa 1850 B.C. and it has been deduced from this that the information provided by the Old Testament places man's appearance on earth at roughly thirty-eight centuries B.C. Luke was obviously guided by these data for his Gospel. He expresses a blatant untruth for having copied them down and we have already seen the decisive historical arguments leading to this statement.

The idea that Old Testament data are unacceptable in the present day is duly admitted; they belong to the 'obsolete' material referred to by the Second Vatican Council. The fact, however that the Gospels take up the

same scientifically incompatible data is an extremely serious observation which may be used to oppose those who defend the historical accuracy of the Gospel texts.

Commentators have quickly sensed this danger. They try to get round the difficulty by saying that it is not a complete genealogical tree, that the evangelist has missed names out. They claim that this was done quite deliberately, and that his sole "intention was to establish the broad lines or essential elements of a line of descent based on historical reality." [35] There is nothing in the texts that permits them to form this hypothesis. In the text it says quite clearly: A was the father of B, or B was the son of A. For the part preceding Abraham in particular, the evangelist draws moreover on the Old Testament where the genealogies are set out in the following form:

When X had lived n years, he became the father of Y . . . When Y had lived n years, he became the father of Z. . . .

There is therefore no break.

The part of Jesus's genealogy according to Luke, which precedes Abraham, is not acceptable in the light of modern knowledge.

2. The Period from Abraham to David.

Here the two genealogies tally (or almost), excepting one or two names: the difference may be explained by copiers' errors.

Does this mean that the evangelists are to be considered accurate?

History situates David at circa 1000 B.C. and Abraham at 1800-1860 B.C.: 14 to 16 generations for roughly eight centuries. Can one believe this? One might say that for this period the Gospel texts are at the very limit of the admissible.

3. The Post-David Period.

It is a great pity, but unfortunately the texts no longer tally at all when it comes to establishing Joseph's line from David, and figuratively speaking, Jesus's, for the Gospel.

Leaving aside the obvious falsification in the *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis* concerning Luke, let us now compare what the two most venerable manuscripts have to offer: the *Codex Vaticanus* and the *Codex Sinaiticus*.

In the genealogy according to Luke 42 names are placed after David (No. 35) down to Jesus (No. 77). In the genealogy according to Matthew 27 are mentioned after David (No. 14) down to Jesus (No. 41). The number of (fictitious) ancestors given to Jesus after David is therefore different in the two Gospels. The names themselves are different as well.

This is not all.

Matthew tells us that he discovered how Jesus's genealogy split up after Abraham into three groups of 14 names; first group from Abraham to David; second from David to the deportation to Babylon; third from the deportation to Jesus. His text does indeed contain 14 names in the first two groups, but in the third—from the deportation to Jesus—there are only 13 and not 14, as expected; the table shows that Shealthiel is No. 29 and Jesus No. 41. There is no variation of Matthew that gives 14 names for this group.

To enable himself to have 14 names in his second group, Matthew takes very great liberties with the Old Testament text. The names of the first six descendants of David (No. 15 to 20) tally with the data in the Old Testament, but the three descendants of Ioram (No. 20), given in Chronicles 11 of the Bible as Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, are suppressed by Matthew. Elsewhere, Jechoniah (No. 28) is for Matthew the son of Josiah, although Kings II of the Bible tells us that Eliakim comes between Josiah and Jechoniah.

It may be seen from this that Matthew has altered the genealogical lines in the Old Testament to present an artificial group of 14 names between David and the deportation to Babylon. There is also the fact that one name is missing in Matthew's third group, so that none of the present-day Gospel texts contains the 42 names mentioned. What is surprising is not so much the existence of the omission itself (explained perhaps by a very old scribe's error that was subsequently perpetuated), but the almost total silence of commentators on this subject. How can one miss this omission? W. Trilling breaks this pious conspiracy of silence in his book *The Gospel According to Matthew* (L'Evangile selon Matthieu)[36] by devoting one line to it. It is a fact which is of considerable importance because the commentators of this Gospel, including the Ecumenical Translation and Cardinal Daniélou among others, stress the great symbolical significance of Matthew's 3 x 14. This significance was so important for the evangelist that he suppressed Biblical names without hesitation to arrive at his numerical demonstration.

To make this hold good, commentators will, no doubt, construct some reassuring statements of an apologetic nature, justifying the fact that names have been craftily suppressed and carefully avoiding the omission that undermines the whole point of what the evangelist was trying to show.

COMMENTARIES OF MODERN EXPERTS IN EXEGESIS.

In his book *The Gospels of Childhood* (1967) *Les Evangiles de l'Enfance* [37], Cardinal Daniélou invests Matthew's 'numerical schematisation' with a symbolic value of paramount importance since it is this that establishes Jesus's ancestry, which is asserted also by Luke. For him Luke and Matthew are 'historians' who have completed their 'historical investigations', and the 'genealogy' has been 'taken down from the archives of Jesus family'. It must be added here that the archives have never been found.[38] Cardinal Daniélou condemns out of hand anyone who criticizes his point of view. "It is the Western mentality, ignorance of Judeo-Christianity and the absence of a Semitic outlook that have made so many experts in exegesis lose their way when interpreting the Gospels. They have projected their own categories onto them: (sic) Platonic, Cartesian, Hegelian and Heideggerian. It is easy to see why everything is mixed up in their minds." Plato, Descartes, Hegel and Heidegger obviously have nothing to do with the critical attitude one may have towards these whimsical genealogies.

In his search for the meaning of Matthew's 3 x 14, the author expands on strange suppositions. They are worth quoting here: "What may be meant are the common ten weeks of the Jewish Apocalypse. The first three, corresponding to the time from Adam to Abraham, would have been subtracted; seven weeks of years would then remain, the first six would correspond to the six times seven representing the three groups of fourteen and leaving the seventh, started by Christ with whom the seventh age of the world begins." Explanations like this are beyond comment!

The commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation-New Testament* also give us numerical variations of an apologetic nature which are equally unexpected: For Matthew's 3 x 14:

a) 14 could be the numerical total of the 3 consonants in the Hebrew name David (D= 4, V= 6), hence 4+6+4= 14.

b) $3 \times 14 = 6 \times 7$ and "Jesus came at the end of the sixth week of Holy history beginning with Abraham."

For Luke, this translation gives 77 names from Adam to Jesus, allowing the number 7 to come up again, this time by dividing 77 by 7 ($7 \times 11 = 77$). It is quite apparent that for Luke the number of variations where words

are added or subtracted is such that a list of 77 names is completely artificial. It does however have the advantage of adapting itself to these numerical games.

The genealogies of Jesus as they appear in the Gospels may perhaps be the subject that has led Christian commentators to perform their most characteristic feats of dialectic acrobatics, on par indeed with Luke's and Matthew's imagination.

Contradictions and Improbabilities in the Descriptions.

Each of the four Gospels contains a large number of descriptions of events that may be unique to one single Gospel or common to several if not all of them. When they are unique to one Gospel, they sometimes raise serious problems. Thus, in the case of an event of considerable importance, it is surprising to find the event mentioned by only one evangelist; Jesus's Ascension into heaven on the day of Resurrection, for example. Elsewhere, numerous events are differently described-sometimes very differently indeed-by two or more evangelists. Christians are very often astonished at the existence of such contradictions between the Gospels-if they ever discover them. This is because they have been repeatedly told in tones of the greatest assurance that the New Testament authors were the eyewitnesses of the events they describe!

Some of these disturbing improbabilities and contradictions have been shown in previous chapters. It is however the later events of Jesus's life in particular, along with the events following the Passion, that form the subject of varying or contradictory descriptions.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PASSION

Father Roguet himself notes that Passover is placed at different times in relation to Jesus's Last Supper with His disciples in the Synoptic Gospels and John's Gospel. John places the Last Supper 'before the Passover celebrations' and the other three evangelists place it during the celebrations themselves. Obvious improbabilities emerge from this divergence: a certain episode becomes impossible because of the position of Passover in relation to it. When one knows the importance it had in the Jewish liturgy and the importance of the meal where Jesus bids farewell to his disciples, how is it possible to believe that the memory of one event in relation to the other could have faded to such an extent in the tradition recorded later by the evangelists?

On a more general level, the descriptions of the Passion differ from one evangelist to another, and more particularly between John and the first three Gospels. The Last Supper and the Passion in John's Gospel are both very long, twice as long as in Mark and Luke, and roughly one and a half times as long as Matthew's text. John records a very long speech of Jesus to His disciples which takes up four chapters (14 to 17) of his Gospel. During this crowning speech, Jesus announces that He will leave His last instructions and gives them His last spiritual testament. There is no trace of this in the other Gospels. The same process can work the other way however; Matthew, Luke and Mark all relate Jesus's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, but John does not mention it.

JOHN'S GOSPEL DOES NOT DESCRIBE THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST.

The most important fact that strikes the reader of the Passion in John's Gospel is that he makes absolutely no reference to the institution of the Eucharist during the Last Supper of Jesus with His Apostles.

There is not a single Christian who does not know the iconography of the Last Supper, where Jesus is for the last time seated among His Apostles at table. The world's greatest painters have always represented this final gathering with John sitting near Jesus, John whom we are accustomed to considering as the author of the Gospel bearing that name.

However astonishing it may appear to many, the majority of specialists do not consider John to have been the author of the fourth Gospel, nor does the latter mention the institution of the Eucharist. The consecration of the bread and wine, which become the body and blood of Jesus, is the most essential act of the Christian liturgy. The other evangelists refer to it, even if they do so in differing terms, as we have noted above. John does not say anything about it. The four evangelists' descriptions have only two single points in common: the prediction of Peter's denial and of the betrayal by one of the Apostles (Judas Iscariot is only actually named in Matthew and John). John's description is the only one which refers to Jesus washing his disciples' feet at the beginning of the meal.

How can this omission in John's Gospel be explained?

If one reasons objectively, the hypothesis that springs immediately to mind (always supposing the story as told by the other three evangelists is exact) is that a passage of John's Gospel relating the said episode was lost. This is not the conclusion arrived at by Christian commentators.

Let us now examine some of the positions they have adopted.

In his *Little Dictionary of the New Testament* (Petit Dictionnaire du Nouveau Testament) A. Tricot makes the following entry under *Last Supper* (Cène). "Last meal Jesus partook of with the Twelve Disciples during which he instituted the Eucharist. It is described in the Synoptic Gospels" (references to Matthew, Mark and Luke). ". . . and the fourth Gospel gives us further details" (references to John). In his entry on the Eucharist (Eucharistie), the same author writes the following. "The institution of the Eucharist is briefly related in the first three Gospels: it was an extremely important part of the Apostolic system of religious instruction. Saint John has added an indispensable complement to these brief descriptions in his account of Jesus's speech on the bread of life (6, 32-58)." The commentator consequently fails to mention that John does not describe Jesus's institution of the Eucharist. The author speaks of 'complementary details', but they are not complementary to the institution of the Eucharist (he basically describes the ceremony of the washing of the Apostles' feet). The commentator speaks of the 'bread of life', but it is Jesus's reference (quite separate from the Last Supper) to God's daily gift of manna in the wilderness at the time of the Jews' exodus led by Moses. John is the only one of the evangelists who records this allusion. In the following passage of his Gospel, John does, of course, mention Jesus's reference to the Eucharist in the form of a digression on the bread, but no other evangelist speaks of this episode.

One is surprised therefore both by John's silence on what the other three evangelists relate and their silence on what, according to John, Jesus is said to have predicted.

The commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible, New Testament*, do actually acknowledge this omission in John's Gospel. This is the explanation they come up with to account for the fact that the description of the institution of the Eucharist is missing: "In general, John is not very interested in the traditions and institutions of a bygone Israel. This may have dissuaded him from showing the establishment of the Eucharist in the Passover liturgy". Are we seriously to believe that it was a lack of interest in the Jewish Passover liturgy that led John not to describe the institution of the most fundamental act. in the liturgy of the new religion?

The experts in exegesis are so embarrassed by the problem that theologians rack their brains to find prefigurations or equivalents of the Eucharist in episodes of Jesus's life recorded by John. O. Culmann for example, in his book, *The New Testament* (Le Nouveau Testament), states that "the changing of the water into wine and the feeding of the five thousand prefigure the sacrament of the Last Supper (the 'Eucharist')". It is

to be remembered that the water was changed into wine because the latter had failed at a wedding in Cana. (This was Jesus's first miracle, described by John in chapter 2, 1-12. He is the only evangelist to do so). In the case of the feeding of the five thousand, this was the number of people who were fed on 5 barley loaves that were miraculously multiplied. When describing these events, John makes no special comment, and the parallel exists only in the mind of this expert in exegesis. One can no more understand the reasoning behind the parallel he draws than his view that the curing of a paralyzed man and of a man born blind 'predict the baptism' and that 'the water and blood issuing from Jesus's side after his death unite in a single fact' a reference to both baptism and the Eucharist.

Another parallel drawn by the same expert in exegesis concerning the Eucharist is quoted by Father Roguet in his book *Initiation to the Gospel* (*Initiation à l'Évangile*). "Some theologians, such as Oscar Culmann, see in the description of the washing of the feet before the Last Supper a symbolical equivalent to the institution of the Eucharist . . ."

It is difficult to see the cogency of all the parallels that commentators have invented to help people accept more readily the most disconcerting omission in John's Gospel.

APPEARANCES OF JESUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

A prime example of imagination at work in a description has already been given in the portrayal of the abnormal phenomena said to have accompanied Jesus's death given in Matthew's Gospel. The events that followed the Resurrection provided material for contradictory and even absurd descriptions on the part of all the evangelists.

Father Roguet in his *Initiation to the Gospel* (*Initiation à l'Évangile*), page 182, provides examples of the confusion, disorder and contradiction reigning in these writings:

"The list of women who came to the tomb is not exactly the same in each of the three Synoptic Gospels. In John only one woman came: Mary Magdalene. She speaks in the plural however, as if she were accompanied: 'we do not know where they have laid him.' In Matthew the Angel predicts to the women that they will see Jesus in Galilee. A few moments later however, Jesus joins them beside the tomb. Luke probably sensed this difficulty and altered the source a little. The Angel says: 'Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee . . .' In fact, Luke only actually refers to three appearances . . ." - "John places two appearances at an interval of one week in the upper room at Jerusalem and the third beside the lake, in Galilee therefore. Matthew records only one appearance in Galilee." The commentator excludes from this examination the last section of Mark's Gospel concerning the appearances because he believes this was 'probably written by another hand'.

All these facts contradict the mention of Jesus's appearances, contained in *Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians*

(15,5-7), to more than five hundred people at once, to James, to all the Apostles and, of course, to Paul himself.

After this, it is surprising therefore to find that Father Roguet stigmatizes, in the same book, the 'grandiloquent and puerile phantasms of certain Apocrypha' when talking of the Resurrection. Surely these terms are perfectly appropriate to Matthew and Paul themselves: they are indeed in complete contradiction with the other Apostles on the subject of the appearances of Jesus raised from the dead.

Apart from this, there is a contradiction between Luke's description, in the Acts of the Apostles, of Jesus's appearance to Paul and what Paul himself succinctly tells us of it. This has led Father Kannengiesser in his book, *Faith in the Resurrection, Resurrection of Faith* (*Foi en la Resurrection, Resurrection de la Foi*), 1974, to stress that Paul, who was 'the sole eyewitness of Christ's resurrection, whose voice comes directly to us from

his writings[39], never speaks of his personal encounter with Him Who was raised from the dead-' . . . except for three extremely , 'he refrains moreover from describing discreet references . . . it.'

The contradiction between Paul, who was the sole eyewitness but is dubious, and the Gospels is quite obvious.

O. Culmann in his book, *The New Testament* (Le Nouveau Testament), notes the contradictions between Luke and Matthew. The first situates Jesus's appearances in Judea, the second in Galilee.

One should also remember the Luke-John contradiction.

John (21, 1-14) relates an episode in which Jesus raised from the dead appears to the fishermen beside the Sea of Tiberias; they subsequently catch so many fish that they are unable to bring them all in. This is nothing other than a repetition of the miracle catch of fish episode which took place at the same spot and was also described by Luke (5, 1-11), as an event of Jesus's life.

When talking of these appearances, Father Roguet assures us in his book that 'their disjointed, blurred and disordered character inspires confidence' because all these facts go to show that there was no connivance between the evangelists[40], otherwise they would definitely have co-ordinated their stories. This is indeed a strange line of argument. In actual fact, they could all have recorded, with complete sincerity, traditions of the communities which (unknown to them) all contained elements of fantasy. This hypothesis is unavoidable when one is faced with so many contradictions and improbabilities in the description of events.

ASCENSION OF JESUS

Contradictions are present until the very end of the descriptions because neither John nor Matthew refer to Jesus's Ascension. Mark and Luke are the only one to speak of it.

For Mark (16, 19), Jesus was 'taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God' without any precise date being given in relation to His Resurrection. It must however be noted that the final passage of Mark containing this sentence is, for Father Roguet, an 'invented' text, although for the Church it is canonic!

There remains Luke, the only evangelist to provide an undisputed text of the Ascension episode (24, 51): 'he parted from them[41] and was carried up into heaven'. The evangelist places the event at the end of the description of the Resurrection and appearance to the eleven Apostles: the details of the Gospel description imply that the Ascension took place on the day of the Resurrection. In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke (whom everybody believes to be their author) describes in chapter 1, 3 Jesus's appearance to the Apostles, between the Passion and the Ascension, in the following terms:

"To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God."

The placing of the Christian festival of the Ascension at forty days after Easter, the Festival of the Resurrection, originates from this passage in the Acts of the Apostles. The date is therefore set in contradiction to Luke's Gospel: none of the other Gospel texts say anything to justify this in a different way.

The Christian who is aware of this situation is highly disconcerted by the obviousness of the contradiction. The *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible, New Testament*, acknowledges the facts but does not expand on the contradiction. It limits itself to noting the relevance the forty days may have had to Jesus's mission.

Commentators wishing to explain everything and reconcile the irreconcilable provide some strange interpretations on this subject.

The Synopsis of the Four Gospels edited in 1972 by the Biblical School of Jerusalem (vol. 2, page 451) contains, for example, some very strange commentaries.

The very word 'Ascension' is criticized as follows: "In fact there was no ascension in the actual physical sense because God is no more 'on high' than he is 'below' " (sic). It is difficult to grasp the sense of this comment because one wonders how Luke could otherwise have expressed himself.

Elsewhere, the author of this commentary sees a 'literary artifice' in the fact that "in the Acts, the Ascension is said to have taken place forty days after the resurrection". this 'artifice' is "intended to stress the notion that the period of Jesus's appearances on earth is at an end". He adds however, in relation to the fact that in Luke's Gospel, "the event is situated during the evening of Easter Sunday, because the evangelist does not put any breaks between the various episodes recorded following the discovery of the empty tomb on the morning of the resurrection..." ". . . surely this is also a literary artifice, intended to allow a certain lapse of time before the appearance of Jesus raised from the dead." (sic)

The feeling of embarrassment that surrounds these interpretations is even more obvious in Father Roguet's book. He discerns not one, but two Ascensions!

"Whereas from Jesus's point of view the Ascension coincides with the Resurrection, from the disciples' point of view it does not take place until Jesus ceases definitely to present Himself to them, so that the Spirit may be given to them and the period of the Church may begin."

To those readers who are not quite able to grasp the theological subtlety of his argument (which has absolutely no Scriptural basis whatsoever), the author issues the following general warning, which is a model of apologetical verbiage:

"Here, as in many similar cases, the problem only appears insuperable if one takes Biblical statements literally, and forgets their religious significance. It is not a matter of breaking down the factual reality into a symbolism which is inconsistent, but rather of looking for the theological intentions of those revealing these mysteries to us by providing us with facts we can apprehend with our senses and signs appropriate to our incarnate spirit."

JESUS'S LAST DIALOGUES. THE PARACLETE OF JOHN'S GOSPEL.

John is the only evangelist to report the episode of the last dialogue with the Apostles. It takes place at the end of the Last Supper and before Jesus's arrest. It ends in a very long speech: four chapters in John's Gospel (14 to 17) are devoted to this narration which is not mentioned anywhere in the other Gospels. These chapters of John nevertheless deal with questions of prime importance and fundamental significance to the future outlook. They are set out with all the grandeur and solemnity that characterizes the farewell scene between the Master and His disciples.

This very touching farewell scene which contains Jesus's spiritual testament, is entirely absent from Matthew, Mark and Luke. How can the absence of this description be explained? One might ask the following. did the text initially exist in the first three Gospels? Was it subsequently suppressed? Why? It must be stated immediately that no answer can be found; the mystery surrounding this huge gap in the narrations of the first three evangelists remains as obscure as ever.

The dominating feature of this narration-seen in the crowning speech-is the view of man's future that Jesus describes, His care in addressing His disciples, and through them the whole of humanity, His recommendations and commandments and His concern to specify the guide whom man must follow after His departure. The text of John's Gospel is the only one to designate him as *Parakletos* in Greek, which in English has become 'Paraclete'. The following are the essential passages:

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete." (14, 15-16)

What does 'Paraclete' mean? The *present* text of John's Gospel explains its meaning as follows:

"But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (14, 26).

"he will bear witness to me" (15, 26).

"it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment . . ." (16, 7-8).

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me . . ."
(16, 13-14).

(It must be noted that the passages in John, chapters 14-17, which have not been cited here, in no way alter the general meaning of these quotations).

On a cursory reading, the text which identifies the Greek word 'Paraclete' with the Holy Spirit is unlikely to attract much attention. This is especially true when the subtitles of the text are generally used for translations and the terminology commentators employ in works for mass publication direct the reader towards the meaning in these passages that an exemplary orthodoxy would like them to have. Should one have the slightest difficulty in comprehension, there are many explanations available, such as those given by A. Tricot in his *Little Dictionary of the New Testament* (Petit Dictionnaire du Nouveau Testament) to enlighten one on this subject. In his entry on the Paraclete this commentator writes the following:

"This name or title translated from the Greek is only used in the New Testament by John: he uses it four times in his account of Jesus's speech after the Last Supper[42] (14, 16 and 26; 15, 26; 16, 7) and once in his First Letter (2, 1). In John's Gospel the word is applied to the Holy Spirit; in the Letter it refers to Christ. 'Paraclete' was a term in current usage among the Hellenist Jews, First century A.D., meaning 'intercessor', 'defender' (. . .) Jesus predicts that the Spirit will be sent by the Father and Son. Its mission will be to take the place of the Son in the role he played during his mortal life as a helper for the benefit of his disciples. The Spirit will intervene and act as a substitute for Christ, adopting the role of Paraclete or omnipotent intercessor."

This commentary therefore makes the Holy Spirit into the ultimate guide of man after Jesus's departure. How does it square with John's text?

It is a necessary question because *a priori* it seems strange to ascribe the last paragraph quoted above to the Holy Spirit: "for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." It seems inconceivable that one could ascribe to the Holy Spirit the ability to speak and declare whatever he hears . . . Logic demands that this question be raised, but to my knowledge, it is not usually the subject of commentaries.

To gain an exact idea of the problem, one has to go back to the basic Greek text. This is especially important because John is universally recognized to have written in Greek instead of another language. The Greek text consulted was the *Novum Testamentum Graece*[43].

Any serious textual criticism begins with a search for variations. Here it would seem that in all the known manuscripts of John's Gospel, the only variation likely to change the meaning of the sentence is in passage 14,

26 of the famous Palimpsest version written in Syriac[44]. Here it is not the Holy Spirit that is mentioned, but quite simply the Spirit. Did the scribe merely miss out a word or, knowing full well that the text he was to copy claimed to make the Holy Spirit hear and speak, did he perhaps lack the audacity to write something that seemed absurd to him? Apart from this observation there is little need to labour the other variations, they are grammatical and do not change the general meaning. The important thing is that what has been demonstrated here with regard to the exact meaning of the verbs 'to hear' and 'to speak' should apply to all the other manuscripts of John's Gospel, as is indeed the case.

The verb 'to hear', in the translation is the Greek verb '*akouô*' meaning to perceive sounds. It has, for example, given us the word 'acoustics', the science of sounds.

The verb 'to speak' in the translation is the Greek verb '*laleô*' which has the general meaning of 'to emit sounds' and the specific meaning of 'to speak'. This verb occurs very frequently in the Greek text of the Gospels. It designates a solemn declaration made by Jesus during His preachings. It therefore becomes clear that the communication to man which He here proclaims does not in any way consist of a statement inspired by the agency of the Holy Spirit. It has a very obvious material character moreover, which comes from the idea of the emission of sounds conveyed by the Greek word that defines it.

The two Greek verbs '*akouô*' and '*laleô*' therefore define concrete actions which can only be applied to a being with hearing and speech organs. It is consequently impossible to apply them to the Holy Spirit.

For this reason, the text of this passage from John's Gospel, as handed down to us in Greek manuscripts, is quite incomprehensible if one takes it as a whole, including the words 'Holy Spirit' in passage 14, 26. "But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name" etc. It is the only passage in John's Gospel that identifies the Paraclete with the Holy Spirit.

If the words 'Holy Spirit' (*to pneuma to agion*) are omitted from the passage, the complete text of John then conveys a meaning which is perfectly clear. It is confirmed moreover, by another text by the same evangelist, the First Letter, where John uses the same word 'Paraclete' simply to mean Jesus, the intercessor at God's side[45]. According to John, when Jesus says (14, 16): "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete", what He is saying is that 'another' intercessor will be sent to man, as He Himself was at God's side on man's behalf during His earthly life.

According to the rules of logic therefore, one is brought to see in John's Paraclete a human being like Jesus, possessing the faculties of hearing and speech formally implied in John's Greek text. Jesus therefore predicts that God will later send a human being to Earth to take up the role defined by John, i.e. to be a prophet who hears God's word and repeats his message to man. This is the logical interpretation of John's texts arrived at if one attributes to the words their proper meaning.

The presence of the term 'Holy Spirit' in today's text could easily have come from a later addition made quite deliberately. It may have been intended to change the original meaning which predicted the advent of a prophet subsequent to Jesus and was therefore in contradiction with the teachings of the Christian churches at the time of their formation; these teachings maintained that Jesus was the last of the prophets.

Conclusions

The facts recorded here and the commentaries quoted from several extremely eminent Christian experts in exegesis have refuted affirmations of orthodoxy supported by the line adopted by the last Council on the

absolute historical authenticity of the Gospels. These are said to have faithfully transmitted what Jesus actually did and taught.

Several different kinds of argument have been given.

Firstly, quotations from the Gospels themselves show flat contradictions. It is impossible to believe two facts that contradict each other. Neither can one accept certain improbabilities and affirmations that go against the cast-iron data provided by modern knowledge. In this respect, the two genealogies of Jesus given in the Gospels and the untruths implied in them are quite conclusive.

These contradictions, improbabilities and incompatibilities pass unnoticed by many Christians. They are astonished when they discover them because they have been influenced by their reading of commentaries that provide subtle explanations calculated to reassure them and orchestrated by an apologetic lyricism. Some very typical examples have been given of the skill employed by certain experts in exegesis in camouflaging what they modestly call 'difficulties'. There are very few passages indeed in the Gospels that have been acknowledged as inauthentic although the Church declares them canonic.

According to Father Kannengiesser, works of modern textual criticism have revealed data which constitute a 'revolution in methods of Biblical exegesis' so that the facts relating to Jesus recorded in the Gospels are no longer 'to be taken literally', they are 'writings suited to an occasion' or 'combat writings'. Modern knowledge has brought to light the history of Judeo-Christianity and the rivalry between communities which accounts for the existence of facts that today's readers find disconcerting. The concept of eyewitness evangelists is no longer defensible, although numerous Christians still retain it today. The work done at the Biblical School of Jerusalem (Fathers Benoit and Boismard) shows very clearly that the Gospels were written, revised and corrected several times. They also warn the reader that he is "obliged in more than one case to give up the notion of hearing Jesus's voice directly".

The historical nature of the Gospels is beyond question. Through descriptions referring to Jesus however, these documents provide us above all with information about the character of their authors, the spokesmen for the tradition of the early Christian communities to which they belonged, and in particular about the struggle between the Judeo-Christians and Paul: Cardinal Daniélou's work is authoritative on these points.

Why be surprised by the fact that some evangelists distort certain events in Jesus's life with the object of defending a personal point of view? Why be surprised by the omission of certain events? Why be surprised by the fictitious nature of other events described?

This leads us to compare the Gospels with the narrative poems found in Medieval literature. A vivid comparison could be made with the *Song of Roland* (Chanson de Roland), the most well-known of all poems of this kind, which relates a real event in a fictitious light. It will be remembered that it describes an actual episode: Roland was leading Charlemagne's rear-guard when it was ambushed on the pass at Roncevaux. The episode which was of minor importance, is said to have taken place on the 15th August, 778 according to historical records (Eginhard). It was raised to the stature of a great feat of arms, a battle in a war of religion. It is a whimsical description, but the imaginary element does not obliterate one of the real battles that Charlemagne had to fight in order to protect his frontiers against the attempts made by neighbouring peoples to penetrate his borders. That is the element of truth and the epic style of narrative does not remove it.

The same holds true for the Gospels: Matthew's phantasms, the flat contradictions between Gospels, the improbabilities, the incompatibilities with modern scientific data, the successive distortions of the text—all these things add up to the fact that the Gospels contain chapters and passages that are the sole product of the human imagination. These flaws do not however cast doubt on the existence of Jesus's mission: the doubt is solely confined to the course it took.

The Qur'an and Modern Science

Introduction

The relationship between the Qur'an and science is *a priori* a surprise, especially when it turns out to be one of harmony and not of discord. A confrontation between a religious book and the secular ideas proclaimed by science is perhaps, in the eyes of many people today, something of a paradox. The majority of today's scientists, with a small number of exceptions of course, are indeed bound up in materialist theories, and have only indifference or contempt for religious questions which they often consider to be founded on legend. In the West moreover, when science and religion are discussed, people are quite willing to mention Judaism and Christianity among the religions referred to, but they hardly ever think of Islam. So many false judgements based on inaccurate ideas have indeed been made about it, that today it is very difficult to form an exact notion of the reality of Islam.

As a prelude to any confrontation between the Islamic Revelation and science, it would seem essential that an outline be given of a religion that is so little known in the West.

The totally erroneous statements made about Islam in the West are sometimes the result of ignorance, and sometimes of systematic denigration. The most serious of all the untruths told about it are however those dealing with facts; for while mistaken opinions are excusable, the presentation of facts running contrary to the reality is not. It is disturbing to read blatant untruths in eminently respectable works written by authors who *a priori* are highly qualified. The following is an example taken from the *Universalis Encyclopedia* (Encyclopedia Universalis) vol. 6. Under the heading Gospels (Evangiles) the author alludes to the differences between the latter and the Qur'an: "The evangelists (. . .) do not (. . .), as in the Qur'an, claim to transmit an autobiography that God miraculously dictated to the Prophet . . .". In fact, the Qur'an has nothing to do with an autobiography: it is a preaching; a consultation of even the worst translation would have made that clear to the author. The statement we have quoted is as far from reality as if one were to define a Gospel as an account of an evangelist's life. The person responsible for this untruth about the Qur'an is a professor at the Jesuit Faculty of Theology, Lyon ! The fact that people utter such untruths helps to give a false impression of the Qur'an and Islam.

There is hope today however because religions are no longer as inward-looking as they were and many of them are seeking for mutual understanding. One must indeed be impressed by a knowledge of the fact that an attempt is being made on the highest level of the hierarchy by Roman Catholics to establish contact with Muslims; they are trying to fight incomprehension and are doing their utmost to change the inaccurate views on Islam that are so widely held.

In the Introduction to this work, I mentioned the great change that has taken place in the last few years and I quoted a document produced by the Office for Non-Christian Affairs at the Vatican under the title *Orientations for a Dialogue between Christians and Muslims* (Orientations pour un dialogue entre chrétiens et musulmans). It is a very important document in that it shows the new position adopted towards Islam. As we read in the third edition of this study (1970), this new position calls for 'a revision of our attitude towards it and a critical examination of our prejudices' . . . 'We should first set about progressively changing the way our Christian brothers see it. This is the most important of all.' . . . We must clear away the 'out-dated image inherited from the past, or distorted by prejudice and slander' . . . , and 'recognize the past injustice towards the Muslims for which the West, with its Christian education, is to blame.' [46] The Vatican document is nearly 150 pages long. It therefore expands on the refutation of classic views held by Christians on Islam and sets out the reality.

Under the title *Emancipating ourselves from our worst prejudices* (Nous libérer de nos préjugés les plus notables) the authors address the following suggestions to Christians: "Here also, we must surrender to a

deep purification of our attitude. In particular, what is meant by this are certain 'set judgements' that are all too often and too lightly made about Islam. It is essential not to cultivate in the secret of our hearts views such as these, too easily or arbitrarily arrived at, and which the sincere Muslim finds confusing."

One extremely important view of this kind is the attitude which leads people to repeatedly use the term Allah' to mean the God of the Muslims, as if the Muslims believed in a God who was different from the God of the Christians. *Al lāh* means 'the Divinity' in Arabic: it is a single God, implying that a correct transcription can only render the exact meaning of the word with the help of the expression 'God'. For the Muslim, *al lāh* is none other than the God of Moses and Jesus.

The document produced by the Office for Non-Christian Affairs at the Vatican stresses this fundamental point in the following terms:

"It would seem pointless to maintain that Allāh is not really God, as do certain people in the West! The conciliar documents have put the above assertion in its proper place. There is no better way of illustrating Islamic faith in God than by quoting the following extracts from *Lumen Gentium*[47]. 'The Muslims profess the faith of Abraham and worship with us the sole merciful God, who is the future judge of men on the Day of Reckoning . . .'"

One can therefore understand the Muslims' protest at the all too frequent custom in European languages of saying '*Allāh*' instead of 'God' . . . Cultivated Muslims have praised D. Masson's French translation of the Qur'an for having 'at last' written 'Dieu'[48] instead of 'Allah'.

The Vatican document points out the following: "Allāh is the only word that Arabic-speaking Christians have for God." Muslims and Christians worship a single God.

The Vatican document then undertakes a critical examination of the other false judgements made on Islam.

'Islamic fatalism' is a widely-spread prejudice; the document examines this and quoting the Qur'an for support, it puts in opposition to this the notion of the responsibility man has, who is to be judged by his actions. It shows that the concept of an Islamic legalism is false; on the contrary, it opposes the sincerity of faith to this by quoting two phrases in the Qur'an that are highly misunderstood in the West:

"There is no compulsion in religion" (sura 2, verse 256)

"(God) has not laid upon you in religion any hardship" (sura 22, verse 78)

The document opposes the widely-spread notion of 'Islam, religion of fear' to 'Islam, religion of love' -love of one's neighbor based on faith in God. It refutes the falsely spread notion that Muslim morality hardly exists and the other notion, shared by so many Jews and Christians, of Islamic fanaticism. It makes the following comment on this: "In fact, Islam was hardly any more fanatical during its history than the sacred bastions of Christianity whenever the Christian faith took on, as it were, a political value." At this point, the authors quote expressions from the Qur'an that show how, in the West, the expression 'Holy War'[49] has been mis-translated; "in Arabic it is *Al jihād fī sabīl Allāh*, the effort on God's road", "the effort to spread Islam and defend it against its aggressors." The Vatican document continues as follows: "The *jihād* is not at all the Biblical kherem; it does not lead to extermination, but to the spreading of God's and man's rights to new lands."-"The past violence of the *jihād* generally followed the rules of war; at the time of the Crusades moreover, it was not always the Muslims that perpetrated the worst slaughters."

Finally, the document deals with the prejudice according to which "Islam is a hide-bound religion which keeps its followers in a kind of superannuated Middle Ages, making them unfit to adapt to the technical conquests of the modern age." It compares analogous situations observed in Christian countries and states the following: "we find, (. ..) in the traditional expansion of Muslim thought, a principle of possible evolution in civilian society."

I am certain that this defense of Islam by the Vatican will surprise many believers today, be they Muslims, Jews or Christians. It is a demonstration of sincerity and open-mindedness that is singularly in contrast with the attitudes inherited from the past. The number of people in the West who are aware of the new attitudes adopted by the highest authorities in the Catholic Church is however very small.

Once one is aware of this fact, it comes as less of a surprise to learn of the actions that sealed this reconciliation: firstly, there was the official visit made by the President of the Office for Non-Christian Affairs at the Vatican to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia; then the official reception given by Pope Paul VI to the Grand Ulema of Saudi Arabia in the course of 1974. Henceforth, one understands more clearly the spiritual significance of the fact that His Grace Bishop Elchinger received the Grand Ulema at his cathedral in Strasbourg and invited them during their visit to pray in the choir. This they did before the altar, turned towards Makka.

Thus the representatives of the Muslim and Christian worlds at their highest level, who share a faith in the same God and a mutual respect for their differences of opinion, have agreed to open a dialogue. This being so, it is surely quite natural for other aspects of each respective Revelation to be confronted. The subject of this confrontation is the examination of the Scriptures in the light of scientific data and knowledge concerning the authenticity of the texts. This examination is to be undertaken for the Qur'an as it was for the Judeo-Christian Revelation.

The relationship between religions and science has not always been the same in any one place or time. It is a fact that there is no writing belonging to a monotheistic religion that condemns science. In practise however, it must be admitted that scientists have had great difficulties with the religious authorities of certain creeds. For many centuries, in the Christian world, scientific development was opposed by the authorities in question, on their own initiative and without reference to the authentic Scriptures. We already know the measures taken against those who sought to enlarge science, measures which often made scientists go into exile to avoid being burnt at the stake, unless they recanted, changed their attitude and begged for pardon. The case of Galileo is always cited in this context: he was tried for having accepted the discoveries made by Copernicus on the rotation of the Earth. Galileo Was condemned as the result of a mistaken interpretation of the Bible, since not a single Scripture could reasonably be brought against him.

In the case of Islam, the attitude towards science was, generally speaking, quite different. Nothing could be clearer than the famous Hadith of the Prophet: "Seek for science, even in China", or the other hadith which says that the search for knowledge is a strict duty for every Muslim man and woman. As we shall see further on in this section, another crucial fact is that the Qur'an, while inviting us to cultivate science, itself contains many observations on natural phenomena and includes explanatory details which are seen to be in total agreement with modern scientific data. There is no equal to this in the Judeo-Christian Revelation.

It would nevertheless be wrong to imagine that, in the history of Islam, certain believers had never harboured a different attitude towards science. It is a fact that, at certain periods, the obligation to educate oneself and others was rather neglected. It is equally true that in the Muslim world, as elsewhere, an attempt was sometimes made to stop scientific development. All the same it will be remembered that at the height of Islam, between the Eighth and Twelfth centuries A.D., i.e. at a time when restrictions on scientific development were in force in the Christian world, a very large number of studies and discoveries were being made at Islamic universities. It was there that the remarkable cultural resources of the time were to be found. The Calif's library at Cordoba contained 400,000 volumes. Averroës was teaching there, and Greek, Indian and Persian sciences were taught. This is why scholars from all over Europe went to study at Cordoba, just as today people go to the United States to perfect their studies. A very great number of ancient manuscripts have come down to us thanks to cultivated Arabs who acted as the vehicle for the culture of conquered countries. We are also greatly indebted to Arabic culture for mathematics (algebra was an Arabic invention), astronomy, physics (optics), geology, botany, medicine (Avicenna) etc. For the very first time, science took on an international character in the Islamic universities of the Middle Ages. At this time, men were more steeped in the religious spirit than they are today. but in the Islamic world, this did not prevent them from being both believers and scientists. Science was the twin of religion and it should never have ceased to be so.

The Medieval period was, for the Christian world, a time of stagnation and absolute conformity. It must be stressed that scientific research was not slowed down by the Judeo-Christian Revelation itself, but rather by those people who claimed to be its servants. Following the Renaissance, the scientists' natural reaction was to take vengeance on their former enemies; this vengeance still continues today, to such an extent indeed that in the West, anyone who talks of God in scientific circles really does stand out. This attitude affects the thinking of all young people who receive a university education, Muslims included.

Their thinking could hardly be different from what it is considering the extreme positions adopted by the most eminent scientists. A Nobel prize winner for Medicine has tried in the last few years to persuade people, in a book intended for mass publication, that living matter was able to create itself by chance from several basic components. Starting, he says, with this primitive living matter, and under the influence of various external circumstances, organized living beings were formed, resulting in the formidable complex being that constitutes man.

Surely these marvels of contemporary scientific knowledge in the field of life should lead a thinking person to the opposite conclusion. The organization presiding over the birth and maintenance of life surely appears more and more complicated as one studies it; the more details one knows, the more admiration it commands. A knowledge of this organization must surely lead one to consider as less and less probable the part chance has to play in the phenomenon of life. The further one advances along the road to knowledge, especially of the infinitely small, the more eloquent are the arguments in favor of the existence of a Creator. Instead of being filled with humility in the face of such facts, man is filled with arrogance. He sneers at any idea of God, in the same way he runs down anything that detracts from his pleasure and enjoyment. This is the image of the materialist society that is flourishing at present in the West.

What spiritual forces can be used to oppose this pollution of thought practised by many contemporary scientists?

Judaism and Christianity make no secret of their inability to cope with the tide of materialism and invasion of the West by atheism. Both of them are completely taken off guard, and from one decade to the next one can surely see how seriously diminished their resistance is to this tide that threatens to sweep everything away. The materialist atheist sees in classic Christianity nothing more than a system constructed by men over the last two thousand years designed to ensure the authority of a minority over their fellow men. He is unable to find in Judeo-Christian writings any language that is even vaguely similar to his own; they contain so many improbabilities, contradictions and incompatibilities with modern scientific data, that he refuses to take texts into consideration that the vast majority of theologians would like to see accepted as an inseparable whole.

When one mentions Islam to the materialist atheist, he smiles with a complacency that is only equal to his ignorance of the subject. In common with the majority of western intellectuals, of whatever religious persuasion, he has an impressive collection of false notions about Islam.

One must, on this point, allow him one or two excuses: Firstly, apart from the newly-adopted attitudes prevailing among the highest Catholic authorities, Islam has always been subject in the West to a so-called 'secular slander'. Anyone in the West who has acquired a deep knowledge of Islam knows just to what extent its history, dogma, and aims have been distorted. One must also take into account the fact that documents published in European languages on this subject (leaving aside highly specialized studies) do not make the work of a person willing to learn any easier.

A knowledge of the Islamic Revelation is indeed fundamental from this point of view. Unfortunately, passages from the Qur'an, especially those relating to scientific data, are badly translated and interpreted, so that a scientist has every right to make criticisms-with apparent justification-that the Book does not actually deserve at all. This detail is worth noting henceforth: inaccuracies in translation or erroneous commentaries (the one is often associated with the other), which would not have surprised anybody one or two centuries ago, offend today's scientists. When faced with a badly translated phrase containing a scientifically

unacceptable statement, the scientist is prevented from taking the phrase into serious consideration. In the chapter on human reproduction, a very typical example will be given of this kind of error.

Why do such errors in translation exist? They may be explained by the fact that modern translators often take up, rather uncritically, the interpretations given by older commentators. In their day, the latter had an excuse for having given an inappropriate definition to an Arabic word containing several possible meanings; they could not possibly have understood the real sense of the word or phrase which has only become clear in the present day thanks to scientific knowledge. In other words, the problem is raised of the necessary revision of translations and commentaries. It was not possible to do this at a certain period in the past, but nowadays we have knowledge that enables us to render their true sense. These problems of translation are not present for the texts of the Judeo-Christian Revelation. the case described here is absolutely unique to the Qur'an.

These scientific considerations, which are very specific to the Qur'an, greatly surprised me at first. Up until then, I had not thought it possible for one to find so many statements in a text compiled more than thirteen centuries ago referring to extremely diverse subjects and all of them totally in keeping with modern scientific knowledge. In the beginning, I had no faith whatsoever in Islam. I began this examination of the texts with a completely open mind and a total objectivity. If there was any influence acting upon me, it was gained from what I had been taught in my youth; people did not speak of Muslims, but of 'Muhammadans', to make it quite clear that what was meant was a religion founded by a man and which could not therefore have any kind of value in terms of God. Like many in the West, I could have retained the same false notions about Islam; they are so widely-spread today, that I am indeed surprised when I come across anyone, other than a specialist, who can talk in an enlightened manner on this subject. I therefore admit that before I was given a view of Islam different from the one received in the West, I was myself extremely ignorant.

I owe the fact that I was able to realize the false nature of the judgements generally made in the West about Islam to exceptional circumstances. It was in Saudi Arabia itself that an inkling was given to me of the extent to which opinions held in the West on this subject are liable to error.

The debt of gratitude I owe to the late King Faisal, whose memory I salute with deepest respect, is indeed very great: the fact that I was given the signal honour of hearing him speak on Islam and was able to raise with him certain problems concerning the interpretation of the Qur'an in relation to modern science is a very cherished memory. It was an extremely great privilege for me to have gathered so much precious information from him personally and those around him.

Since I had now seen the wide gap separating the reality of Islam from the image we have of it in the West, I experienced a great need to learn Arabic (which I did not speak) to be sufficiently well-equipped to progress in the study of such a misunderstood religion. My first goal was to read the Qur'an and to make a sentence-by-sentence analysis of it with the help of various commentaries essential to a critical study. My approach was to pay special attention to the description of numerous natural phenomena given in the Qur'an; the highly accurate nature of certain details referring to them in the Book, which was only apparent in the original, struck me by the fact that they were in keeping with present-day ideas, although a man living at the time of Muhammad could not have suspected this at all. I subsequently read several works written by Muslim authors on the scientific aspects- of the Qur'anic text: they were extremely helpful in my appreciation of it, but I have not so far discovered a general study of this subject made in the West.

What initially strikes the reader confronted for the first time with a text of this kind is the sheer abundance of subjects discussed: the Creation, astronomy, the explanation of certain matters concerning the earth, and the animal and vegetable kingdoms, human reproduction. Whereas monumental errors are to be found in the Bible, I could not find a single error in the Qur'an. I had to stop and ask myself: if a man was the author of the Qur'an, how could he have written facts in the Seventh century A.D. that today are shown to be in keeping with modern scientific knowledge? There was absolutely no doubt about it: the text of the Qur'an we have today is most definitely a text of the period, if I may be allowed to put it in these terms (in the next chapter of the present section of the book I shall be dealing with this problem). What human explanation can there be for this observation? In my opinion there is no explanation; there is no special reason why an

inhabitant of the Arabian Peninsula should, at a time when King Dagobert was reigning in France (629-639 A.D.), have had scientific knowledge on certain subjects that was ten centuries ahead of our own.

It is an established fact that at the time of the Qur'anic Revelation, i.e. within a period of roughly twenty years straddling Hegira (622 A.D.), scientific knowledge had not progressed for centuries and the period of activity in Islamic civilization, with its accompanying scientific upsurge, came *after* the close of the Qur'anic Revelation. Only ignorance of such religious and secular data can lead to the following bizarre suggestion I have heard several times: if surprising statements of a scientific nature exist in the Qur'an, they may be accounted for by the fact that Arab scientists were so far ahead of their time and Muhammad was influenced by their work. Anyone who knows anything about Islamic history is aware that the period of the Middle Ages which saw the cultural and scientific upsurge in the Arab world came after Muhammad, and would not therefore indulge in such whims. Suggestions of this kind are particularly off the mark because the majority of scientific facts which are either suggested or very clearly recorded in the Qur'an have only been confirmed in modern times.

It is easy to see therefore how for centuries commentators on the Qur'an (including those writing at the height of Islamic culture) have inevitably made errors of interpretation in the case of certain verses whose exact meaning could not possibly have been grasped. It was not until much later, at a period not far from our own, that it was possible to translate and interpret them correctly. This implies that a thorough linguistic knowledge is not in itself sufficient to understand these verses from the Qur'an. What is needed along with this is a highly diversified knowledge of science. A study such as the present one embraces many disciplines and is in that sense encyclopedic. As the questions raised are discussed, the variety of scientific knowledge essential to the understanding of certain verses of the Qur'an will become clear.

The Qur'an does not aim at explaining certain laws governing the Universe, however; it has an absolutely basic religious objective. The descriptions of Divine Omnipotence are what principally incite man to reflect on the works of Creation. They are accompanied by references to facts accessible to human observation or to laws defined by God who presides over the organization of the universe both in the sciences of nature and as regards man. One part of these assertions is easily understood, but the meaning of the other can only be grasped if one has the essential scientific knowledge it requires. This means that in former times, man could only distinguish an apparent meaning which led him to draw the wrong conclusions on account of the inadequacy of his knowledge at the time in question.

It is possible that the choice of verses from the Qur'an which are to be studied for their scientific content may perhaps seem too small for certain Muslim writers who have already drawn attention to them before I have. In general, I believe I have retained a slightly smaller number of verses than they have. On the other hand, I have singled out several verses which until now have not, in my opinion, been granted the importance they deserve from a scientific point of view. Wherever I may have mistakenly failed to take verses into consideration for this study that were selected by these writers, I hope that they will not hold it against me. I have also found, on occasion, that certain books contain scientific interpretations which do not appear to me to be correct; it is with an open mind and a clear conscience that I have provided personal interpretations of such verses.

By the same token, I have tried to find references in the Qur'an to phenomena accessible to human comprehension but which have not been confirmed by modern science. In this context, I think I may have found references in the Qur'an to the presence of planets in the Universe that are similar to the Earth. It must be added that many scientists think this is a perfectly feasible fact, although modern data cannot provide any hint of certainty. I thought I owed it to myself to mention this, whilst retaining all the attendant reservations that might be applied.

Had this study been made thirty years ago, it would have been necessary to add another fact predicted by the Qur'an to what would have been cited concerning astronomy, this fact is the conquest of space. At that time, subsequent to the first trials of ballistic missiles, people imagined a day when man would perhaps have the material possibility of leaving his earthly habitat and exploring space. It was then known that a verse existed in the Qur'an predicting how one day man would make this conquest. This statement has now been verified.

The present confrontation between Holy Scripture and science brings ideas into play, both for the Bible and the Qur'an, which concern scientific truth. For this confrontation to be valid, the scientific arguments to be relied upon must be quite soundly established and must leave no room for doubt. Those who balk at the idea of accepting the intervention of science in an appreciation of the Scriptures deny that it is possible for science to constitute a valid term of comparison (whether it be the Bible, which does not escape the comparison unscathed-and we have seen why-or the Qur'an, which has nothing to fear from science). Science, they say, is changing with the times and a fact accepted today may be rejected later.

This last comment calls for the following observation: a distinction must be drawn between scientific theory and duly controlled observed fact. Theory is intended to explain a phenomenon or a series of phenomena not readily understandable. In many instances theory changes: it is liable to be modified or replaced by another theory when scientific progress makes it easier to analyse facts and envisage a more viable explanation. On the other hand, an observed fact checked by experimentation is not liable to modification: it becomes easier to define its characteristics, but it remains the same. It has been established that the Earth revolves around the Sun and the Moon around the Earth, and this fact will not be subject to revision; all that may be done in the future is to define the orbits more clearly.

A regard for the changing nature of theory is, for example, what made me reject a verse from the Qur'an thought by a Muslim physicist to predict the concept of anti-matter, a theory which is at present the subject of much debate. One can, on the other hand, quite legitimately devote great attention to a verse from the Qur'an describing the aquatic origins of life, a phenomenon we shall never be able to verify, but which has many arguments that speak in its favour. As for observed facts such as the evolution of the human embryo, it is quite possible to confront different stages described in the Qur'an with the data of modern embryology and find complete concordance between modern science and the verses of the Qur'an referring to this subject.

This confrontation between the Qur'an and science has been completed by two other comparisons: one is the confrontation of modern knowledge with Biblical data on the same subjects; and the other is the comparison from the same scientific point of view between the data in the Qur'an, the Book of Revelation transmitted by God to the Prophet, and the data in the Hadiths, books narrating the deeds and sayings of Muhammad that lie outside the written Revelation.

At the end of this, the third section of the present work, the detailed results of the comparison between the Biblical and Qur'anic description of a single event are given, along with an account of how the passage fared when subjected to the scientific criticism of each description. An examination has, for example, been made in the case of the Creation and of the Flood. In each instance, the incompatibilities with science in the Biblical description have been made clear. Also to be seen is the complete agreement between science and the descriptions in the Qur'an referring to them. We shall note precisely those differences that make one description scientifically acceptable in the present day and the other unacceptable.

This observation is of prime importance, since in the West, Jews, Christians and Atheists are unanimous in stating (without a scrap of evidence however) that Muhammad wrote the Qur'an or had it written as an imitation of the Bible. It is claimed that stories of religious history in the Qur'an resume Biblical stories. This attitude is as thoughtless as saying that Jesus Himself duped His contemporaries by drawing inspiration from the Old Testament during His preachings: the whole of Matthew's Gospel is based on this continuation of the Old Testament, as we have indeed seen already. What expert in exegesis would dream of depriving Jesus of his status as God's envoy for this reason? This is nevertheless the way that Muhammad is judged more often than not in the West: "all he did Was to copy the Bible". It is a summary judgement that does not take account of the fact that the Qur'an and the Bible provide different versions of a single event. People prefer not to talk about the difference in the descriptions. They are pronounced to be the same and thus scientific knowledge need not be brought in. We shall enlarge on these problems when dealing with the description of the Creation and the Flood.

The collection of hadiths are to Muhammad what the Gospels are to Jesus: descriptions of the actions and sayings of the Prophet. Their authors were not eyewitnesses.. (This applies at least to the compilers of the collections of hadiths which are said to be the most authentic and were collected much later than the time

when Muhammad was alive). They do not in any way constitute books containing the written Revelation. They are not the word of God, but the sayings of the Prophet. In these books, which are very widely read, statements are to be found containing errors from a scientific point of view, especially medical remedies. We naturally discount anything relating to problems of a religious kind, since they are not discussed here in the context of the hadiths. Many hadiths are of doubtful authenticity. they are discussed by Muslim scientists themselves. When the scientific nature of one of the hadiths is touched upon in the present work, it is essentially to put into relief all that distinguishes them from the Qur'an itself when seen from this point of view, since the latter does not contain a single scientific statement that is unacceptable. The difference, as we shall see, is quite startling.

The above observation makes the hypothesis advanced by those who see Muhammad as the author of the Qur'an quite untenable. How could a man, from being illiterate, become the most important author, in terms of literary merit, in the whole of Arabic literature? How could he then pronounce truths of a scientific nature that no other human being could possibly have developed at the time, and all this without once making the slightest error in his pronouncements on the subject?

The ideas in this study are developed from a purely scientific point of view. They lead to the conclusion that it is inconceivable for a human being living in the Seventh century A.D. to have made statements in the Qur'an on a great variety of subjects that do not belong to his period and for them to be in keeping with what was to be known only centuries later. For me, there can be no human explanation to the Qur'an.

Authenticity of the Qur'an. How It Came To Be Written.

Thanks to its undisputed authenticity, the text of the Qur'an holds a unique place among the books of Revelation, shared neither by the Old nor the New Testament. In the first two sections of this work, a review was made of the alterations undergone by the Old Testament and the Gospels before they were handed down to us in the form we know today. The same is not true for the Qur'an for the simple reason that it was written down at the time of the Prophet; we shall see how it came to be written, i.e. the process involved.

In this context, the differences separating the Qur'an from the Bible are in no way due to questions essentially concerned with date. Such questions are constantly put forward by certain people without regard to the circumstances prevailing at the time when the Judeo-Christian and the Qur'anic Revelations were written; they have an equal disregard for the circumstances surrounding the transmission of the Qur'an to the Prophet. It is suggested that a Seventh century text had more likelihood of coming down to us unaltered than other texts that are as many as fifteen centuries older. This comment, although correct, does not constitute a sufficient reason ; it is made more to excuse the alterations made in the Judeo-Christian texts in the course of centuries than to underline the notion that the text of the Qur'an, which was more recent, had less to fear from being modified by man.

In the case of the Old Testament, the sheer number of authors who tell the same story, plus all the revisions carried out on the text of certain books from the pre-Christian era, constitute as many reasons for inaccuracy and contradiction. As for the Gospels, nobody can claim that they invariably contain faithful accounts of Jesus's words or a description of his actions strictly in keeping with reality. We have seen how successive versions of the texts showed a lack of definite authenticity and moreover that their authors were not eyewitnesses.

Also to be underlined is the distinction to be made between the Qur'an, a book of written Revelation, and the hadiths, collections of statements concerning the actions and sayings of Muhammad. Some of the Prophet's companions started to write them down from the moment of his death. As an element of human error could

have slipped in, the collection had to be resumed later and subjected to rigorous criticism so that the greatest credit is in practise given to documents that came along after Muhammad. Their authenticity varies, like that of the Gospels. Not a single Gospel was written down at the time of Jesus (they were all written long after his earthly mission had come to an end), and not a single collection of hadiths was compiled during the time of the Prophet.

The situation is very different for the Qur'an. As the Revelation progressed, the Prophet and the believers following him recited the text by heart and it was also written down by the scribes in his following. It therefore starts off with two elements of authenticity that the Gospels do not possess. This continued up to the Prophet's death. At a time when not everybody could write, but everyone was able to recite, recitation afforded a considerable advantage because of the double-checking possible when the definitive text was compiled.

The Qur'anic Revelation was made by Archangel Gabriel to Muhammad. It took place over a period of more than twenty years of the Prophet's life, beginning with the first verses of Sura 96, then resuming after a three-year break for a long period of twenty years up to the death of the Prophet in 632 A.D., i.e. ten years before Hegira and ten years after Hegira.[50]

The following was the first Revelation (sura 96, verses 1 to 5)[51].

"Read: In the name of thy Lord who created,
Who created man from something which clings
Read! Thy Lord is the most Noble
Who taught by the pen
Who taught man what he did not know."

Professor Hamidullah notes in the Introduction to his French translation of the Qur'an that one of the themes of this first Revelation was the 'praise of the pen as a means of human knowledge' which would 'explain the Prophet's concern for the preservation of the Qur'an in writing.'

Texts formally prove that long before the Prophet left Makka for Madina (i.e. long before Hegira), the Qur'anic text so far revealed had been written down. We shall see how the Qur'an is authentic in this. We know that Muhammad and the Believers who surrounded him were accustomed to reciting the revealed text from memory. It is therefore inconceivable for the Qur'an to refer to facts that did not square with reality because the latter could so easily be checked with people in the Prophet's following, by asking the authors of the transcription.

Four suras dating from a period prior to Hegira refer to the writing down of the Qur'an before the Prophet left Makka in 622 (sura 80, verses 11 to 16):

"By no means! Indeed it is a message of instruction
Therefore whoever wills, should remember
On leaves held in honor
Exalted, purified
In the hands of scribes
Noble and pious."

Yusuf Ali, in the commentary to his translation, 1934, wrote that when the Revelation of this sura was made, forty-two or forty-five others had been written and were kept by Muslims in Makka (out of a total of 114).

--Sura 85, verses 21 and 22:

"Nay, this is a glorious reading[52]
On a preserved tablet"

--Sura 56, verses 77 to 80:

"This is a glorious reading[52]
In a book well kept Which none but the purified teach.
This is a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds."

--Sura 25, verse 5:

"They said: Tales of the ancients which he has caused to be written and they are dictated to him morning and evening." Here we have a reference to the accusations made by the Prophet's enemies who treated him as an imposter. They spread the rumour that stories of antiquity were being dictated to him and he was writing them down or having them transcribed (the meaning of the word is debatable, but one must remember that Muhammad was illiterate). However this may be, the verse refers to this act of making a written record which is pointed out by Muhammad's enemies themselves.

A sura that came after Hegira makes one last mention of the leaves on which these divine instructions were written:

--Sura 98, verses 2 and 3:

"An (apostle) from God recites leaves
Kept pure where are decrees right and straight."

The Qur'an itself therefore provides indications as to the fact that it was set down in writing at the time of the Prophet. It is a known fact that there were several scribes in his following, the most famous of whom, Zaid Ibn Thâbit, has left his name to posterity.

In the preface to his French translation of the Qur'an (1971), Professor Hamidullah gives an excellent description of the conditions that prevailed when the text of the Qur'an was written, lasting up until the time of the Prophet's death:

"The sources all agree in stating that whenever a fragment of the Qur'an was revealed, the Prophet called one of his literate companions and dictated it to him, indicating at the same time the exact position of the new fragment in the fabric of what had already been received . . . Descriptions note that Muhammad asked the scribe to reread to him what had been dictated so that he could correct any deficiencies . . . Another famous story tells how every year in the month of Ramadan, the Prophet would recite the whole of the Qur'an (so far revealed) to Gabriel . . ., that in the Ramadan preceding Muhammad's death, Gabriel had made him recite it twice . . . It is known how since the Prophet's time, Muslims acquired the habit of keeping vigil during Ramadan, and of reciting the whole of the Qur'an in addition to the usual prayers expected of them. Several sources add that Muhammad's scribe Zaid was present at this final bringing-together of the texts. Elsewhere, numerous other personalities are mentioned as well."

Extremely diverse materials were used for this first record: parchment, leather, wooden tablets, camels' scapula, soft stone for inscriptions, etc.

At the same time however, Muhammad recommended that the faithful learn the Qur'an by heart. They did this for a part if not all of the text recited during prayers. Thus there were *Hafizun* who knew the whole of the Qur'an by heart and spread it abroad. The method of doubly preserving the text both in writing and by memorization proved to be extremely precious.

Not long after the Prophet's death (632), his successor Abu Bakr, the first Caliph of Islam, asked Muhammad's former head scribe, Zaid Ibn Thâbit, to make a copy. This he did. On Omar's initiative (the future second Caliph), Zaid consulted all the information he could assemble at Madina: the witness of the *Hafizun*, copies of the Book written on various materials belonging to private individuals, all with the object of avoiding possible errors in transcription. Thus an extremely faithful copy of the Book was obtained.

The sources tell us that Caliph Omar, Abu Bakr's successor in 634, subsequently made a single volume (*mushaf*) that he preserved and gave on his death to his daughter Hafsa, the Prophet's widow.

The third Caliph of Islam, Uthman, who held the caliphate from 644 to 655, entrusted a commission of experts with the preparation of the great recension that bears his name. It checked the authenticity of the document produced under Abu Bakr which had remained in Hafsa's possession until that time. The commission consulted Muslims who knew the text by heart. The critical analysis of the authenticity of the text was carried out very rigorously. The agreement of the witnesses was deemed necessary before the slightest verse containing debatable material was retained. It is indeed known how some verses of the Qur'an correct others in the case of prescriptions: this may be readily explained when one remembers that the Prophet's period of apostolic activity stretched over twenty years (in round figures). The result is a text containing an order of suras that reflects the order followed by the Prophet in his complete recital of the Qur'an during Ramadan, as mentioned above.

One might perhaps ponder the motives that led the first three Caliphs, especially Uthman, to commission collections and recensions of the text. The reasons are in fact very simple: Islam's expansion in the very first decades following Muhammad's death was very rapid indeed and it happened among peoples whose native language was not Arabic. It was absolutely necessary to ensure the spread of a text that retained its original purity. Uthman's recension had this as its objective.

Uthman sent copies of the text of the recension to the centres of the Islamic Empire and that is why, according to Professor Hamidullah, copies attributed to Uthman exist in Tashkent and Istanbul. Apart from one or two possible mistakes in copying, the oldest documents known to the present day, that are to be found throughout the Islamic world, are identical; the same is true for documents preserved in Europe (there are fragments in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris which, according to the experts, date from the Eighth and Ninth centuries A.D., i.e. the Second and Third Hegirian centuries). The numerous ancient texts that are known to be in existence all agree except for very minor variations which do not change the general meaning of the text at all. If the context sometimes allows more than one interpretation, it may well have to do with the fact that ancient writing was simpler than that of the present day.[53]

The 114 suras were arranged in decreasing order of length; there were nevertheless exceptions. The chronological sequence of the Revelation was not followed. In the majority of cases however, this sequence is known. A large number of descriptions are mentioned at several points in the text, sometimes giving rise to repetitions. Very frequently a passage will add details to a description that appears elsewhere in an incomplete form. Everything connected with modern science is, like many subjects dealt with in the Qur'an, scattered throughout the book without any semblance of classification.

* It is important to say that Qur'an was collected during the Prophet's lifetime. The Prophet, and before his death, had showed the collection of Qur'an scrolls to Gabriel many times. So, what is said in regard to collecting of Qur'an during the ruling period of the Caliphs after the Prophet means copying the same original copy written in the Prophet's life which later were sent to different countries, and it does not mean the recording or writing of Qur'an through oral sources as it may be thought. Yet, many of the Companions have written the Qur'an exactly during the lifetime of the Prophet. One of those was Imam Ali's copy. He, because of his close relation with the Prophet, his long companionship, didn't only collect the dispersed scrolls of the Qur'an, but he rather could accompany it with a remarkable Tafseer, mentioning the occasion of each verse's descension, and was regarded the first Tafseer of Qur'an since the beginning of the Islamic mission. Ibn Abi Al-Hadeed says, "All the scholars agree that Imam Ali is the first one who collected the Qur'an," (see Sharhul Nahj, 271). Another one, Kittani, says that Imam Ali could arrange the Qur'an according to each surah's order of descension, (see Strategic Administration, 461). Ibn Sireen Tabee relates from Ikrimeh, who

said that 'Imam Ali could collect the Qur'an in a manner that if all mankind and jinn gathered to do that, they could not do it at all,'(see al-Itqan 1157-58). Ibn Jizzi Kalbi also narrates, "If only we could have the Qur'an which was collected by Ali then we could gain a lot of knowledge," (see al-Tasheel, 114). That was only a brief note about the benefits of Imam Ali's Mus'haf, as Ibn Sireen had declared, "I searched so long for Imam Ali's Mus'haf and I corresponded with Medina, but all my efforts gone in vain." (see al-Itqan, 1/58, al-Tabaqat, 2/338). Thus; it becomes certain that Qur'an has been collected by Imam Ali without simple difference between it and other known copies, except in the notes mentioned by Him which renders it as the most excellent copy has ever been known. Unfortunately, the inconvenient political conditions emerged after the demise of the Prophet, (i.e after the wicked issue of Saqeefah) was a main obstacle to get benefits from that remarkable copy of the Qur'an.

The Creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

DIFFERENCES FROM AND RESEMBLANCES TO THE BIBLICAL DESCRIPTION.

In contrast to the Old Testament, the Qur'an does not provide a unified description of the Creation. Instead of a continuous narration, there are passages scattered all over the Book which deal with certain aspects of the Creation and provide information on the successive events marking its development with varying degrees of detail. To gain a clear idea of how these events are presented, the fragments scattered throughout a large number of suras have to be brought together.

This dispersal throughout the Book of references to the same subject is not unique to the theme of the Creation. Many important subjects are treated in the same manner in the Qur'an: earthly or celestial phenomena, or problems concerning man that are of interest to scientists. For each of these themes, the same effort has been made here to bring all the verses together.

For many European commentators, the description of the Creation in the Qur'an is very similar to the one in the Bible and they are quite content to present the two descriptions side by side. I believe this concept is mistaken because there are very obvious differences. On subjects that are by no means unimportant from a scientific point of view, we find statements in the Qur'an whose equivalents we search for in vain in the Bible. The latter contains descriptions that have no equivalent in the Qur'an.

The obvious resemblances between the two texts are well known; among them is the fact that, at first glance, the number given to the successive stages of the Creation is identical: the six days in the Bible correspond to the six days in the Qur'an. In fact however, the problem is more complex than this and it is worth pausing to examine it.

The Six Periods of the Creation.

There is absolutely no ambiguity whatsoever in the Biblical[54] description of the Creation in six days followed by a day of rest, the sabbath, analogous with the days of the week. It has been shown how this mode of narration practiced by the priests of the Sixth century B.C. served the purpose of encouraging the people to observe the sabbath. All Jews were expected to rest[55] on the sabbath as the Lord had done after he had laboured during the six days of the week.

The way the Bible interprets it, the word 'day' means the interval of time between two successive sunrises or sunsets for an inhabitant of the Earth. When defined in this way, the day is conditioned by the rotation of the

Earth on its own axis. It is obvious that logically-speaking there can be no question of 'days' as defined just now, if the mechanism that causes them to appear-i.e. the existence of the Earth and its rotation around the Sun-has not already been fixed in the early stages of the Creation according to the Biblical description. This impossibility has already been emphasized in the first part of the present book.

When we refer to the majority of translations of the Qur'an, we read that-analogous with the Biblical description-the process of the Creation for the Islamic Revelation also took place over a period of six days. It is difficult to hold against the translators the fact that they have translated the Arabic word by its most common meaning. This is how it is usually expressed in translations so that in the Qur'an, verse 54, sura 7 reads as follows:

"Your Lord is God Who created the heavens and the earth in six days."

There are very few translations and commentaries of the Qur'an that note how the word 'days' should really be taken to mean 'periods'. It has moreover been maintained that if the Qur'anic texts on the Creation divided its stages into 'days', it was with the deliberate intention of taking up beliefs held by all the Jews and Christians at the dawn of Islam and of avoiding a head-on confrontation with such a widely-held belief.

Without in any way wishing to reject this way of seeing it, one could perhaps examine the problem a little more closely and scrutinize *in the Qur'an itself*, and more generally in the language of the time, the possible meaning of the word that many translators themselves still continue to translate by the word 'day' *yaum*, plural *ayyam* in Arabic.[56]

Its most common meaning is 'day' but it must be stressed that it tends more to mean the diurnal light than the length of time that lapses between one day's sunset and the next. The plural *ayyam* can mean, not just 'days', but also 'long length of time', an indefinite period of time (but always long). The meaning 'period of time' that the word contains is to be found elsewhere in the Qur'an. Hence the following:

--sura 32, verse 5:

". . . in a period of time (*yaum*) whereof the measure is a thousand years of your reckoning."
(It is to be noted that the Creation in six periods is precisely what the verse preceding verse 5 refers to).

--sura 70, verse 4:

". . . in a period of time (*yaum*) whereof the measure is 50,000 years."

The fact that the word , *yaum*' could mean a period of time that was quite different from the period that we mean by the word 'day' struck very early commentators who, of course, did not have the knowledge we possess today concerning the length of the stages in the formation of the Universe. In the Sixteenth century A.D. for example, Abu al Su'ud, who could not have had any idea of the day as defined astronomically in terms of the Earth's rotation, thought that for the Creation a division must be considered that was not into days as we usually understand the word, but into 'events' (in Arabic *nauba*).

Modern commentators have gone back to this interpretation. Yusuf Ali (1934), in his commentary on each of the verses that deals with the stages in the Creation, insists on the importance of taking the word, elsewhere interpreted as meaning 'days', to mean in reality 'very long Periods, or Ages, or Aeons'.

It is therefore possible to say that in the case of the Creation of the world, the Qur'an allows for long periods of time numbering six. It is obvious that modern science has not permitted man to establish the fact that the complicated stages in the process leading to the formation of the Universe numbered six, but it has clearly shown that long periods of time were involved compared to which 'days' as we conceive them would be ridiculous.

One of the longest passages of the Qur'an, which deals with the Creation, describes the latter by juxtaposing an account of earthly events and one of celestial events. The verses in question are verses 9 to 12, sura 41:

(God is speaking to the Prophet)

"Say. Do you disbelieve Him Who created the earth in two periods? Do you ascribe equals to Him. He is the Lord of the Worlds.

"He set in the (earth) mountains standing firm. He blessed it.

He measured therein its sustenance in four periods, in due proportion, in accordance with the needs of those who ask for (sustenance? or information?).

"Moreover (*tumma*) He turned to heaven when it was smoke and said to it and to the earth: come willingly or unwillingly! They said: we come in willing obedience.

"Then He ordained them seven heavens in two periods, and He assigned to each heaven its mandate by Revelation. And We adorned the lower heaven with luminaries and provided it a guard. Such is the decree of the All Mighty, the Full of Knowledge."

These four verses of sura 41 contain several points to which we shall return. the initially gaseous state of celestial matter and the highly symbolic definition of the number of heavens as seven. We shall see the meaning behind this figure. Also of a symbolic nature is the dialogue between God on the one hand and the primordial sky and earth on the other. here however it is only to express the submission of the Heavens and Earth, once they were formed, to divine orders.

Critics have seen in this passage a contradiction with the statement of the six periods of the Creation. By adding the two periods of the formation of the Earth to the four periods of the spreading of its sustenance to the inhabitants, plus the two periods of the formation of the Heavens, we arrive at eight periods. This would then be in contradiction with the six periods mentioned above.

In fact however, this text, which leads man to reflect on divine Omnipotence, beginning with the Earth and ending with the Heavens, provides two sections that are expressed by the Arabic word *tumma*, translated by 'moreover', but which also means 'furthermore' or 'then'. The sense of a 'sequence' may therefore be implied referring to a sequence of events or a series of man's reflections on the events mentioned here. It may equally be a simple reference to events juxtaposed without any intention of bringing in the notion of the one following the other. However this may be, the periods of the Creation of the Heavens may just as easily coincide with the two periods of the Earth's creation. A little later we shall examine how the basic process of the formation of the Universe is presented in the Qur'an and we shall see how it can be jointly applied to the Heavens and the Earth in keeping with modern ideas. We shall then realize how perfectly reasonable this way is of conceiving the simultaneous nature of the events here described.

There does not appear to be any contradiction between the passage quoted here and the concept of the formation of the world in six stages that is to be found in other texts in the Qur'an.

THE QUR'AN DOES NOT LAY DOWN A SEQUENCE FOR THE CREATION OF THE EARTH AND HEAVENS.

In the two passages from the Qur'an quoted above, reference was made in one of the verses to the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth (sura 7, verse 54) , and elsewhere to the Creation of the Earth and the Heavens (sura 41, verses 9 to 12). The Qur'an does not therefore appear to lay down a sequence for the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

The number of verses in which the Earth is mentioned first is quite small, e.g. sura 2, verse 29 and sura 20, verse 4, where a reference is made to "Him Who created the earth and the high heavens". The number of verses where the Heavens are mentioned before the Earth is, on the other hand, much larger: (sura 7, verse

54; sura 10, verse 3; sura 11, verse 7; sura 25, verse 59; sura 32, verse 4; sura 50, verse 38; sura 57, verse 4; sura 79, verses 27 to 33; sura 91, verses 5 to 10).

In actual fact, apart from sura 79, there is not a single passage in the Qur'an that lays down a definite sequence; a simple coordinating conjunction (*wa*) meaning 'and' links two terms, or the word *tumma* which, as has been seen in the above passage, can indicate either a simple juxtaposition or a sequence.

There appears to me to be only one passage in the Qur'an where a definite sequence is plainly established between different events in the Creation. It is contained in verses 27 to 33, sura 79:

"Are you the harder to create Or. is it the heaven that (God) built? He raised its canopy and fashioned it with harmony. He made dark the night and he brought out the forenoon. And after that (*ba' da dalika*) He spread it out. Therefrom he drew out its water and its pasture. And the mountains He has fixed firmly. Goods for you and your cattle."

This list of earthly gifts from God to man, which is expressed in a language suited to farmers or nomads on the Arabian Peninsula, is preceded by an invitation to reflect on the creation of the heavens. The reference to the stage when God spreads out the earth and renders it arable is very precisely situated in time after the alternating of night and day has been achieved. Two groups are therefore referred to here, one of celestial phenomena, and the other of earthly phenomena articulated in time. The reference made here implies that the earth must necessarily have existed before being spread out and that it consequently existed when God created the Heavens. The idea of a *concomitance* therefore arises from the heavenly and earthly evolutions with the interlocking of the two phenomena. Hence, one must not look for any special significance in the reference in the Qur'anic text to the Creation of the Earth before the Heavens or the Heavens before the Earth: the position of the words does not influence the order in which the Creation took place, unless however it is specifically stated.

THE BASIC PROCESS OF THE FORMATION OF THE UNIVERSE AND THE RESULTING COMPOSITION OF THE WORLDS.

The Qur'an presents in two verses a brief synthesis of the phenomena that constituted the basic process of the formation of the Universe.

--sura 21, verse 30:

"Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, then We clove them asunder and We got every living thing out of the water. Will they not then believe?"

--sura 41, verse 11. God orders the Prophet to speak after inviting him to reflect on the subject of the earth's creation:

"Moreover (God) turned to the Heaven when it was smoke and said to it and to the earth . . ."
There then follow the orders to submit, referred to on page 136.

We shall come back to the aquatic origins of life and examine them along with other biological problems raised by the Qur'an. The important things to remember at present are the following. a) The statement of the existence of a gaseous mass with fine particles, for this is how the word 'smoke' (*dukan* in Arabic) is to be interpreted. Smoke is generally made up of a gaseous substratum, plus, in more or less stable suspension, fine particles that may belong to solid and even liquid states of matter at high or low temperature;

b) The reference to a separation process (*fatq*) of an primary single mass whose elements were initially fused together (*ratq*). It must be noted that in Arabic '*fatq*' is the action of breaking, diffusing, separating, and that '*ratq*' is the action of fusing or binding together elements to make a homogenous whole.

This concept of the separation of a whole into several parts is noted in other passages of the Book with reference to multiple worlds. The first verse of the first sura in the Qur'an proclaims, after the opening invocation, the following: "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful", "Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds."

The terms 'worlds' reappears dozens of times in the Qur'an. The Heavens are referred to as multiple as well, not only on account of their plural form, but also because of their symbolic numerical quantity. 7.

This number is used 24 times throughout the Qur'an for various numerical quantities. It often carries the meaning of 'many' although we do not know exactly why this meaning of the figure was used. The Greeks and Romans also seem to have used the number 7 to mean an undefined idea of plurality. In the Qur'an, the number 7 refers to the Heavens themselves (*samawat*). It alone is understood to mean 'Heavens'. The 7 roads of the Heavens are mentioned once:

--sura 2, verse 29:

"(God) is the One Who created for you all that is on the earth. Moreover He turned to the heaven and fashioned seven heavens with harmony. He is Full of Knowledge of all things."

--sura 23, verse 17:

"And We have created above you seven paths. We have never been unmindful of the Creation."

--sura 67, verse 3:

"(God) is the One Who created seven heavens one above an other. Thou canst see no fault in the creation of the Beneficent. Turn the vision again! Canst thou see any rift?"

--sura 71, verse 15-16:

"Did you see how God created seven heavens one above another and made the moon a light therein and made the sun a lamp?[57]"

--sura 78, verse 12:

"We have built above you seven strong (heavens) and placed a blazing lamp."

Here the blazing lamp is the Sun.

The commentators on the Qur'an are in agreement on all these verses: the number 7 means no more than plurality.[58]

There are therefore many Heavens and Earths, and it comes as no small surprise to the reader of the Qur'an to find that earths such as our own may be found in the Universe, a fact that has not yet been verified by man in our time.

Verse 12 of sura 65 does however predict the following:

"God is the One Who created seven heavens and of the earth (*ard*) a similar number. The Command descends among them so that you know that God has power over all things and comprehends all things in His knowledge."

Since 7 indicates an indefinite plurality (as we have seen), it is possible to conclude that the Qur'anic text clearly indicates the existence of more than one single Earth, our own Earth (*ard*); there are others like it in the Universe.

Another observation which may surprise the Twentieth century reader of the Qur'an is the fact that verses refer to three groups of things created, i.e.

--things in the Heavens.
--things on the Earth
--things between the Heavens and the Earth

Here are several of these verses:

--sura 20, verse 6;
"To Him (God) belongs what is in the heavens, on earth, between them and beneath the soil."

--sura 25, verse 59:
"... the One Who created the heavens, the earth and what is between them in six periods."

--sura 32, verse 4:
"God is the One Who created the heavens, the earth and what is between them in six periods."

--sura 50, verse 38:
"We created the heavens, the earth .and what is between them in six periods, and no weariness touched Us."[59]

The reference in the Qur'an to 'what is between the Heavens and the Earth' is again to be found in the following verses: sura 21, verse 16; sura 44, verses 7 and 38 ; sura 78, verse 37; sura 15, verse 85; sura 46, verse 3; sura 43, Verse 85.

This Creation outside the Heavens and outside the Earth, mentioned several times, is a priori difficult to imagine. To understand these verses, reference must be made to the most recent human observations on the existence of cosmic extra-galactic material and one must indeed go back to ideas established by contemporary science on the formation of the Universe, starting with the simplest and proceeding to the most complex. These are the subject of the following paragraph.

Before passing on to these purely scientific matters however, it is advisable to recapitulate the main points on which the Qur'an gives us information about the Creation. According to the preceding quotations, they are as follows:

- 1) Existence of six periods for the Creation in general.
- 2) Interlocking of stages in the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth.
- 3) Creation of the Universe out of an initially unique mass forming a block that subsequently split up.
- 4) Plurality of the Heavens and of the Earths.
- 5) Existence of an intermediary creation 'between the Heavens and the Earth'.

SOME MODERN SCIENTIFIC DATA CONCERNING THE FORMATION OF THE UNIVERSE.

The Solar System.

The Earth and planets rotating around the Sun constitute an organized world of dimensions which, to our human scale, appear quite colossal. The Earth is, after all, roughly 93 million miles from the Sun. This is a very great distance for a human being, but it is very small in comparison to the distance separating the Sun from the furthestmost planet from it in the solar system (Pluto); in round numbers it is 40 times the distance from the Earth to the Sun, i.e. approximately 3,672 million miles away. This distance, when doubled, represents the largest dimension of our solar system. The Sun's light takes nearly 6 hours to reach Pluto, and

yet the journey is made at the terrifying speed of over 186,000 miles per second. The light coming from stars on the very confines of the known celestial world therefore takes billions of years to reach us.

The Galaxies.

The Sun, of which we are a satellite like the other planets surrounding it, is itself an infinitesimally small element among a hundred billion stars that form a whole, called a galaxy. On a fine summer night, the whole of space seems to be filled with stars that make up what is known as the Milky Way. This group has extremely large dimensions. Whereas light could cross the solar system in units of one hour, it would require something like 90,000 years to go from one extreme to the other of the most compact group of stars that make up our galaxy.

The galaxy that we belong to however, even though it is so incredibly huge, is only a small part of the Heavens. There are giant agglomerates of stars similar to the Milky Way that lie outside our galaxy. They were discovered a little over fifty years ago, when astronomy was able to make use of an optical instrument as sophisticated as the one that made possible the construction of the Mount Wilson telescope in the United States. Thus a very large number indeed of isolated galaxies and masses of galaxies have been discovered that are so far away that it was necessary to institute a special unit of light-years, the 'parsec' (the distance light travels in 3.26 years at 186,000 miles per second).

Formation and Evolution of Galaxies, Stars and Planetary Systems.

What was there originally in the immensely large space the galaxies now occupy? Modern science can only answer this question as of a certain period in the evolution of the Universe; it cannot put into numbers the length of time that separates this period from us.

At the earliest time it can provide us with, modern science has every reason to maintain that the Universe was formed of a gaseous mass principally composed of hydrogen and a certain amount of helium that was slowly rotating. This nebula subsequently split up into multiple fragments with very large dimensions and masses, so large indeed, that specialists in astrophysics are able to estimate their mass from 1 to 100 billion times the present mass of the Sun (the latter represents a mass that is over 300,000 times that of the Earth). These figures give an idea of the large size of the fragments of primary gaseous mass that were to give birth to the galaxies.

A new fragmentation was to form the stars. There then followed the intervention of a condensing process where gravitational forces came into play, (since these bodies were moving and rotating more and more quickly), along with pressures and the influence of magnetic fields and of radiations. The stars became shiny as they contracted and transformed the gravitational forces into thermal energy. Thermonuclear reactions came into play, and heavier atoms were formed by fusion at the expense of others that were lighter; this is how the transition was made from hydrogen to helium, then to carbon and oxygen, ending with metals and metalloids. Thus the stars have a life of their own and modern astronomy classifies them according to their present stage of evolution. The stars also have a death; in the final stage of their evolution, the violent implosion of certain stars has been observed so that they become veritable 'corpses'.

The planets, and in particular the Earth, originated in a separation process starting from an initial constituent that in the beginning was the primary nebula. A fact that has no longer been contested for over twenty-five years is that the Sun condensed inside the single nebula and that the planets did the same inside the surrounding nebular disc. One must stress-and this is of prime importance for the subject in hand-that there was no sequence in the formation of the celestial elements such as the Sun nor in the formation of an earthly element. There is an evolutionary parallelism with the identity of origin.

Here, science can give us information on the period during which the events just mentioned took place. Having estimated the age of our galaxy at roughly ten billion years, according to this hypothesis, the formation of the solar system took place a little over five billion years later'. The study of natural radio activity makes it possible to place the age of the Earth and the time the Sun was formed at 4.5 billion years ago, to within a present-day accuracy of 100 million years, according to some scientists' calculations. This accuracy is to be admired, since 100 million years may represent a long time to us but the ratio 'maximum error/total time-to-be-measured' is $0.1/4.5$, i.e. 2.2%.

Specialists in astrophysics have therefore attained a high degree of knowledge concerning the general process involved in the formation of the solar system. It may be summarized as follows: condensation and contraction of a rotating gaseous mass, splitting up into fragments that leave the Sun, and planets in their places, among them the Earth.[60] The knowledge that science has gained on the primary nebula and the way it split up into an incommensurable quantity of stars grouped into galaxies leaves absolutely no doubt as to the legitimacy of a concept of the plurality of worlds. It does not however provide any kind of certainty concerning the existence in the Universe of anything that might, either closely or vaguely, resemble the Earth.

The Concept of the Plurality of the Worlds.

In spite of the above, modern specialists in astrophysics consider it highly likely that planets similar to Earth are present in the Universe. As far as the solar system is concerned, nobody seriously entertains the possibility of finding general conditions similar to those on Earth on another planet in this system. We must therefore seek for them outside the solar system. The likelihood of their existing outside it is considered quite probable for the following reasons:

It is thought that in our galaxy half of the 100 billion stars must, like the Sun, have a planetary system. The fifty billion stars do indeed, like the Sun, rotate very slowly, a characteristic which suggests that they are surrounded by planets that are their satellites. These stars are so far away that the possible planets are unobservable, but their existence is thought to be highly probable on account of certain trajectory characteristics; a slight undulation of the star's trajectory indicates the presence of a companion planetary satellite. Thus the Barnard Star probably has at least one planetary companion with a mass greater than that of Jupiter and may even have two satellites. As P. Guérin writes: "All the evidence points to the fact that planetary systems are scattered in profusion all over the universe. The solar system and the Earth are not unique." And as a corollary. "Life, like the planets that harbour it, is scattered throughout the universe, in those places where the physico-chemical conditions necessary for its flowering and development are to be found."

Interstellar Material.

The basic process in the formation of the Universe therefore lay in the condensation of material in the primary nebula followed by its division into fragments that originally constituted galactic masses. The latter in their turn split up into stars that provided the sub-product of the process, i.e. the planets. These successive separations left among the groups of principle elements what one might perhaps call 'remains'. Their more scientific name is 'interstellar galactic material'. It has been described in various ways; there are bright nebulae that reflect the light received from other stars and are perhaps composed of 'dusts' or 'smokes', to use the terminology of experts in astrophysics, and then there are the dark nebulae that are less dense, consisting of interstellar material that is even more modest, known for its tendency to interfere with photometric measurements in astronomy. There can be no doubt about the existence of 'bridges' of material between the galaxies themselves. Although these gases may be very rarefied, the fact that they occupy such a colossal space, in view of the great distance separating the galaxies, could make them correspond to a mass possibly greater than the total mass of the galaxies in spite of the low density of the former. A. Boichot considers the presence of these intergalactic masses to be of prime importance which could "considerably alter ideas on the evolution of the Universe."

We must now go back to the basic ideas on the Creation of the Universe that were taken from the Qur'an and look at them in the light of modern scientific data.

CONFRONTATION WITH THE DATA IN THE OUR'AN CONCERNING THE CREATION.

We shall examine the five main points on which the Qur'an gives information about the Creation.

1) The six periods of the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth covered, according to the Qur'an, the formation of the celestial bodies and the Earth, and the development of the latter until (with its 'sustenance') it became inhabitable by man. In the case of the Earth, the events described in the Qur'an happened over four periods. One could perhaps see in them the four geological periods described by modern science, with man's appearance, as we already know, taking place in the quaternary era. This is purely a hypothesis since nobody has an answer to this question.

It must be noted however, that the formation of the heavenly bodies and the Earth, as explained in verses 9 to 12, sura 41 (see page 136) required two phases. If we take the Sun and its subproduct the Earth as an example (the only one accessible to us), science informs us that their formation occurred by a process of condensation of the primary nebula and then their separation. This is exactly what the Qur'an expresses very clearly when it refers to the processes that produced a fusion and subsequent separation starting from a celestial 'smoke'. Hence there is complete correspondence between the facts of the Qur'an and the facts of science.

2) Science showed the interlocking of the two stages in the formation of a star (like the Sun) and its satellite (like the Earth). This interconnection is surely very evident in the text of the Qur'an examined.

3) The existence at an early stage of the Universe of the 'smoke' referred to in the Qur'an, meaning the predominantly gaseous state of the material that composes it, obviously corresponds to the concept of the primary nebula put forward by modern science.

4) The plurality of the heavens, expressed in the Qur'an by the number 7, whose meaning we have discussed, is confirmed by modern science due to the observations experts in astrophysics have made on galactic systems and their very large number. On the other hand the plurality of earths that are similar to ours (from certain points of view at least) is an idea that arises in the text of the Qur'an but has not yet been demonstrated to be true by science; all the same, specialists consider this to be quite feasible.

5) The existence of an intermediate creation between 'the Heavens' and 'the Earth' expressed in the Qur'an may be compared to the discovery of those bridges of material present outside organized astronomic systems.

Although not all the questions raised by the descriptions in the Qur'an have been completely confirmed by scientific data, there is in any case absolutely no opposition between the data in the Qur'an on the Creation and modern knowledge on the formation of the Universe. This fact is worth stressing for the Qur'anic Revelation, whereas it is very obvious indeed that the present-day text of the Old Testament provides data on the same events that are unacceptable from a scientific point of view. It is hardly surprising, since the description of the Creation in the Sacerdotal version of the Bible[61] was written by priests at the time of the deportation to Babylon who had the legalist intentions already described and therefore compiled a description that fitted their theological views. The existence of such an enormous difference between the Biblical description and the data in the Qur'an concerning the Creation is worth underlining once again on account of the totally gratuitous accusations leveled against Muhammad since the beginnings of Islam to the effect that he copied the Biblical descriptions. As far as the Creation is concerned, this accusation is totally unfounded. *How could a man living fourteen hundred years ago have made corrections to the existing description to such an extent that he eliminated scientifically inaccurate material and, on his own initiative, made statements that science has been able to verify only in the present day? This hypothesis is completely untenable. The description of the Creation given in the Qur'an is quite different from the one in the Bible.*

ANSWERS TO CERTAIN OBJECTIONS

Indisputably, resemblances do exist between narrations dealing with other subjects, particularly religious history, in the Bible and in the Qur'an. It is moreover interesting to note from this point of view how nobody holds against Jesus the fact that he takes up the same sort of facts and Biblical teachings. This does not, of course, stop people in the West from accusing Muhammad of referring to such facts in his teaching with the suggestion that he is an imposter because he presents them as a Revelation. As for the proof that Muhammad reproduced in the Qur'an what he had been told or dictated by the rabbis, it has no more substance than the statement that a Christian monk gave him a sound religious education. One would do well to re-read what R. Blachère in his book, *The Problem of Muhammad* (Le Problème de Mahomet)[62], has to say about this 'fable'.

A hint of a resemblance is also advanced between other statements in the Qur'an and beliefs that go back a very long way, probably much further in time than the Bible.

More generally speaking, the traces of certain cosmogonic myths have been sought in the Holy Scriptures; for example the belief held by the Polynesians in the existence of primeval waters that were covered in darkness until they separated when light appeared; thus Heaven and Earth were formed. This myth is compared to the description of the Creation in the Bible, where there is undoubtedly a resemblance. It would however be superficial to then accuse the Bible of having copied this from the cosmogonic myth.

It is just as superficial to see the Qur'anic concept of the division of the primeval material constituting the Universe at its initial stage-a concept held by modern science-as one that comes from various cosmogonic myths in one form or another that express something resembling it.

It is worth analysing these mythical beliefs and descriptions more closely. Often an initial idea appears among them which is reasonable in itself, and is in some cases borne out by what we today know (or think we know) to be true, except that fantastic descriptions are attached to it in the myth. This is the case of the fairly widespread concept of the Heavens and the Earth originally being united then subsequently separated. When, as in Japan, the image of the egg plus an expression of chaos is attached to the above with the idea of a seed inside the egg (as for all eggs), the imaginative addition makes the concept lose all semblance of seriousness. In other countries, the idea of a plant is associated with it; the plant grows and in so doing raises up the sky and separates the Heavens from the Earth. Here again, the imaginative quality of the added detail lends the myth its very distinctive character. Nevertheless a common characteristic remains, i.e. the notion of a single mass at the beginning of the evolutionary process leading to the formation of the Universe which then divided to form the various 'worlds. that we know today.

The reason these cosmogonic myths are mentioned here is to underline the way they have been embroidered by man's imagination and to show the basic difference between them and the statements in the Qur'an on the same subject. The latter are free from any of the whimsical details accompanying such beliefs; on the contrary, they are distinguished by the sober quality of the words in which they are made and their agreement with scientific data.

Such statements in the Qur'an concerning the Creation, which appeared nearly fourteen centuries ago, obviously do not lend themselves to a human explanation.

Astronomy in the Qur'an

The Qur'an is full of reflections on the Heavens. In the preceding chapter on the Creation, we saw how the plurality of the Heavens and Earths was referred to, as well as what the Qur'an calls an intermediary creation 'between the Heavens and the Earth', modern science has verified the latter. The verses referring to the Creation already contain a broad idea of what is to be found in the heavens, i.e. of everything outside the earth.

Apart from the verses that specifically describe the Creation, there are roughly another forty verses in the Qur'an which provide information on astronomy complementing what has already been given. Some of them are not much more than reflections on the glory of the Creator, the Organizer of all the stellar and planetary systems. These we know to be arranged according to balancing positions whose stability Newton explained in his law of the mutual attraction of bodies.

The first verses to be quoted here hardly furnish much material for scientific analysis: the aim is simply to draw attention to God's Omnipotence. They must be mentioned however to give a realistic idea of the way the Qur'anic text described the organization of the Universe fourteen centuries ago.

These references constitute a new fact of divine Revelation. The organization of the world is treated in neither the Gospels nor the Old Testament (except for a few notions whose general inaccuracy we have already seen in the Biblical description of the Creation). The Qur'an however deals with this subject in depth. What it describes is important, but so is what it does not contain. It does not in fact provide an account of the theories prevalent *at the time* of the Revelation that deal with the organization of the celestial world, theories that science was later to show were inaccurate. An example of this will be given later. This negative consideration must however be pointed out.[63]

A. GENERAL REFLECTIONS CONCERNING THE SKY.

--sura 50, verse 6. The subject is man in general.

"Do they not look at the sky above them, how We have built it and adorned it, and there are no rifts in it."

--sura 31, verse 10:

"(God) created the heavens without any pillars that you can see..."

--sura 13, verse 2:

"God is the One Who raised the heavens without any pillars that you can see, then He firmly established Himself on the throne and He subjected the sun and moon . . ."

These two verses refute the belief that the vault of the heavens was held up by pillars, the only things preventing the former from crushing the earth.

--sura 55, verse 7:

"the sky (God) raised it . . ."

--sura 22, verse 65:

"(God) holds back the sky from falling on the earth unless by His leave . . ."

It is known how the remoteness of celestial masses at great distance and in proportion to the magnitude of their mass itself constitutes the foundation of their equilibrium. The more remote the masses are, the weaker the force is that attracts one to the other. The nearer they are, the stronger the attraction is that one has to the other: this is true for the Moon, which is near to the Earth (astronomically speaking) and exercises an influence by laws of attraction on the position occupied by the waters of the sea, hence the phenomenon of the tides. If two celestial bodies come too close to one another, collision is inevitable. The fact that they are subjected to an order is the *sine qua non* for the absence of disturbances.

The subjection of the Heavens to divine order is often referred to as well:

--sura 23, verse 86. God is speaking to the Prophet.

"Say: Who is Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the tremendous throne?"

We have already seen how by 'seven heavens' what is meant is not 7, but an indefinite number of Heavens.

--sura 45, verse 13:

"For you (God) subjected all that is in the heavens and on the earth, all from Him. Behold! In that are signs for people who reflect."

--sura 55, verse 5:

"The sun and moon (are subjected) to calculations"

--sura 6, verse 96:

"(God) appointed the night for rest and the sun and the moon for reckoning."

--sura 14, verse 33:

"For you (God) subjected the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses. And for you He subjected the night and the day."

Here one verse completes another: the calculations referred to result in the regularity of the course described by the heavenly bodies in question, this is expressed by the word *da'ib*, the present participle of a verb whose original meaning was 'to work eagerly and assiduously at something'. Here it is given the meaning of 'to apply oneself to something with care in a perseverant, invariable manner, in accordance with set habits'.

--sura 36, verse 39: God is speaking:

"And for the moon We have appointed mansions till she returns like an old shriveled palm branch."

This is a reference to the curled form of the palm branch which, as it shrivels up, takes on the moon's crescent. This commentary will be completed later.

--sura 16, verse 12:

"For you (God) subjected the night and the day, the sun and the moon; the stars are in subjection to His Command. Verily in this are signs for people who are wise."

The practical angle from which this perfect celestial order is seen is underlined on account of its value as an aid to man's travel on earth and by sea, and to his calculation of time. This comment becomes clear when one bears in mind the fact that the Qur'an was originally a preaching addressed to men who only understood the simple language of their everyday lives. This explains the presence of the following reflections.

--sura 6, verse 97:

"(God) is the One Who has set out for you the stars, that you may guide yourselves by them through the darkness of the land and of the sea. We have detailed the signs for people who know."

--sura 16, verse 16:

"(God sets on the earth) landmarks and by the stars (men) guide themselves."

--sura 10, verse 5:

"God is the One Who made the sun a shining glory and the moon a light and for her ordained mansions, so that you might know the number of years and the reckoning (of the time). God created this in truth. He explains the signs in detail for people who know."

This calls for some comment. Whereas the Bible calls the Sun and Moon 'lights', and merely adds to one the adjective 'greater' and to the other 'lesser', the Qur'an ascribes differences other than that of dimension to each respectively. Agreed, this is nothing more than a verbal distinction, but how was one to communicate to men at this time without confusing them, while at the same time expressing the notion that the Sun and Moon were not absolutely identical 'lights'?

B. NATURE OF HEAVENLY BODIES.

The Sun and the Moon.

The Sun is a shining glory (*diya'*) and the Moon a light (*nur*). This translation would appear to be more correct than those given by others, where the two terms are inverted. In fact there is little difference in meaning since *diya'* belongs to a root (*dw'*) which, according to Kazimirski's authoritative Arabic/French dictionary, means 'to be bright, to shine' (e.g. like a fire). The same author attributes to the substantive in question the meaning of 'light'.

The difference between Sun and Moon will be made clearer by further quotes from the Qur'an.

--sura 25, verse 61:

"Blessed is the One Who placed the constellations in heaven and placed therein a lamp and a moon giving light."

--sura 71, 15-16:

"Did you see how God created seven heavens one above an other and made the moon a light therein and made the sun a lamp?"

--sura 78, verses 12-13:

"We have built above you seven strong (heavens) and placed a blazing lamp."

The blazing lamp is quite obviously the sun.

Here the moon is defined as a body that gives light (*munir*) from the same root as *nur* (the light applied to the Moon). The Sun however is compared to a torch (*siraj*) or a blazing (*wahhaj*) lamp.

A man of Muhammad's time could easily distinguish between the Sun, a blazing heavenly body well known to the inhabitants of the desert, and the Moon, the body of the cool of the night. The comparisons found in the Qur'an on this subject are therefore quite normal. What is interesting to note here is the sober quality of the comparisons, and the absence in the text of the Qur'an of any elements of comparison that might have prevailed at the time and which in our day would appear as phantasmagorical.

It is known that the Sun is a star that generates intense heat and light by its internal combustions, and that the Moon, which does not give of light itself, and is an inert body (on its external layers at least) merely reflects the light received from the Sun.

There is nothing in the text of the Qur'an that contradicts what we know today about these two celestial bodies.

The Stars.

As we know, the stars are heavenly bodies like the Sun. They are the scene of various physical phenomena of which the easiest to observe is their generation of light. They are heavenly bodies that produce their own light.

The word 'star' appears thirteen times in the Qur'an (*najm*, plural *nujum*); it comes from a root meaning to appear, to come into sight. The word designates a visible heavenly body without saying of what kind, i.e. either generator of light or mere reflector of light received. To make it clear that the object so designated is a star, a qualifying phrase is added as in the following sura:

--sura 86, verses 1-3:

"By the sky and the Night-Visitor, who will tell thee what the Night-Visitor is, the Star of piercing brightness." [64]

The evening star is qualified in the Qur'an by the word *takib* meaning 'that which pierces through something' (here the night shadows). The same word is moreover used to designate shooting stars (sura 37, verse 10): the latter are the result of combustion.

The Planets.

It is difficult to say whether these are referred to in the Qur'an with the same exact meaning that is given to the heavenly bodies in the present day.

The planets do not have their own light. They revolve around the Sun, Earth being one of them. While one may presume that others exist elsewhere, the only ones known are those in the solar system.

Five planets other than Earth were known to the ancients: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Three have been discovered in recent times: Uranus, Neptune and Pluto.

The Qur'an would seem to designate these by the word *kaukab* (plural *kawakib*) without stating their number. Joseph's dream (sum 12) refers to eleven of them, but the description is, by definition, an imaginary one.

A good definition of the meaning of the word *kaukab* in the Qur'an seems to have been given in a very famous verse. The eminently spiritual nature of its deeper meaning stands forth, and is moreover the subject of much debate among experts in exegesis. It is nevertheless of great interest to offer an account of the comparison it contains on the subject of the word that would seem to designate a 'planet'.

Here is the text in question: (sura 24, verse 35)

"God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as if there were a niche and within it a luminary. The luminary is in a glass. The glass is as if it were a planet glittering like a pearl."

Here the subject is the projection of light onto a body that reflects it (glass) and gives it the glitter of a pearl, like a planet that is lit by the sun. This is the only explanatory detail referring to this word to be found in the Qur'an.

The word is quoted in other verses. In some of them it is difficult to distinguish which heavenly bodies are meant (sura 6, verse 76; sura 82, verses 1-2).

In one verse however, when seen in the light of modern science, it would seem very much that these can only be the heavenly bodies that we know to be planets. In sura 37, verse 6, we see the following:

"We have indeed adorned the lowest heaven with an ornament, the planets."

Is it possible that the expression in the Qur'an 'lowest heaven' means the 'solar system'? It is known that among the celestial elements nearest to us, there are no other permanent elements apart from the planets: the Sun is the only star in the system that bears its name. It is difficult to see what other heavenly bodies could be meant if not the planets. The translation given would therefore seem to be correct and the Qur'an to refer to the existence of the planets as defined in modern times.

The Lowest Heaven.

The Qur'an mentions the lowest heaven several times along with the heavenly bodies of which it is composed. The first among these would seem to be the planets, as we have just seen. When however the Qur'an associates material notions intelligible to us, enlightened as we are today by modern science, with statements of a purely spiritual nature, their meaning becomes obscure.

Thus the verse quoted could easily be understood, except that the following verse (7) of the same sura 37 speaks of a 'guard against every rebellious evil spirit', 'guard' again being referred to in sura 21, verse 32 and sura 41, verse 12, so that we are confronted by statements of quite a different kind.

What meaning can one attach moreover to the 'projectiles for the stoning of demons' that according to verse 5, sura 67 are situated in the lowest heaven? Do the 'luminaries' referred to in the same verse have something to do with the shooting stars mentioned above?[65]

All these observations seem to lie outside the subject of this study. They have been mentioned here for the sake of completeness. At the present stage however, it would seem that scientific data are unable to cast any light on a subject that goes beyond human understanding.

C. CELESTIAL ORGANIZATION.

The information the Qur'an provides on this subject mainly deals with the solar system. References are however made to phenomena that go beyond the solar system itself: they have been discovered in recent times.

There are two very important verses on the orbits of the Sun and Moon:

--sura 21, verse 33:

"(God is) the One Who created the night, the day, the sun and the moon. Each one is travelling in an orbit with its own motion."

--sura 36, verse 40:

"The sun must not catch up the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. Each one is travelling in an orbit with its own motion."

Here an essential fact is clearly stated: the existence of the Sun's and Moon's orbits, plus a reference is made to the travelling of these bodies in space with their own motion.

A negative fact also emerges from a reading of these verses: it is shown that the Sun moves in an orbit, but no indication is given as to what this orbit might be in relation to the Earth. At the time of the Qur'anic Revelation, it was thought that the Sun moved while the Earth stood still. This was the system of geocentrism that had held sway since the time of ptolemy, Second century B.C., and was to continue to do so until Copernicus in the Sixteenth century A.D. Although people supported this concept at the time of Muhammad, it does not appear anywhere in the Qur'an, either here or elsewhere.

The Existence of the Moon's and the Sun's Orbits.

The Arabic word *falak* has here been translated by the word 'orbit'. many French translators of the Qur'an attach to it the meaning of a 'sphere'. This is indeed its initial sense. Hamidullah translates it by the word 'orbit'.

The word caused concern to older translators of the Qur'an who were unable to imagine the circular course of the Moon and the Sun and therefore retained images of their course through space that were either more or less correct, or hopelessly wrong. Si Hamza Boubekur in his translation of the Qur'an cites the diversity of interpretations given to it: "A sort of axle, like an iron rod, that a mill turns around; a celestial sphere, orbit, sign of the zodiac, speed, wave . . .", but he adds the following observation made by Tabari, the famous Tenth century commentator: "It is our duty to keep silent when we do not know." (XVII, 15). This shows just how incapable men were of understanding this concept of the Sun's and Moon's orbit. It is obvious that if the word had expressed an astronomical concept common in Muhammad's day, it would not have been so difficult to interpret these verses. A Dew concept therefore existed in the Qur'an that was not to be explained until centuries later.

1. The Moon's Orbit.

Today, the concept is widely spread that the Moon is a satellite of the Earth around which it revolves in periods of twenty-nine days. A correction must however be made to the absolutely circular form of its orbit, since modern astronomy ascribes a certain eccentricity to this, so that the distance between the Earth and the Moon (240,000 miles) is only the average distance.

We have seen above how the Qur'an underlined the usefulness of observing the Moon's movements in calculating time (sura 10, verse 5, quoted at the beginning of this chapter.) This system has often been criticized for being archaic, impractical and unscientific in comparison to our system based on the Earth's rotation around the Sun, expressed today in the Julian calendar.

This criticism calls for the following two remarks:

a) Nearly fourteen centuries ago, the Qur'an was directed at the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula who were used to the lunar calculation of time. It was advisable to address them in the only language they could understand and not to upset the habits they had of locating spatial and temporal reference-marks which were nevertheless quite efficient. It is known how well-versed men living in the desert are in the observation of the sky. they navigated according to the stars and told the time according to the phases of the Moon. Those were the simplest and most reliable means available to them.

b) Apart from the specialists in this field, most people are unaware of the perfect correlation between the Julian and the lunar calendar: 235 lunar months correspond exactly to 19 Julian years of 365 1/4 days. Then length of our year of 365 days is not perfect because it has to be rectified every four years (with a leap year) .

With the lunar calendar, the same phenomena occur every 19 years (Julian). This is the Metonic cycle, named after the Greek astronomer Meton, who discovered this exact correlation between solar and lunar time in the Fifth century B.C.

2. The Sun.

It is more difficult to conceive of the Sun's orbit because we are so used to seeing our solar system organized around it. To understand the verse from the Qur'an, the position of the Sun in our galaxy must be considered, and we must therefore call on modern scientific ideas.

Our galaxy includes a very large number of stars spaced so as to form a disc that is denser at the centre than at the rim. The Sun occupies a position in it which is far removed from the centre of the disc. The galaxy revolves on its own axis which is its centre with the result that the Sun revolves around the same centre in a circular orbit. Modern astronomy has worked out the details of this. In 1917, Shapley estimated the distance between the Sun and the centre of our galaxy at 10 kiloparsecs i.e., in miles, circa the figure 2 followed by 17 zeros. To complete one revolution on its own axis, the galaxy and Sun take roughly 250 million years. The Sun travels at roughly 150 miles per second in the completion of this.

The above is the orbital movement of the Sun that was already referred to by the Qur'an fourteen centuries ago. The demonstration of the existence and details of this is one of the achievements of modern astronomy.

Reference to the Movement of the Moon and the Sun in Space With Their Own Motion.

This concept does not appear in those translations of the Qur'an that have been made by men of letters. Since the latter know nothing about astronomy, they have translated the Arabic word that expresses this movement by one of the meanings the word has: 'to swim'. They have done this in both the French translations and the, otherwise remarkable, English translation by Yusuf Ali.[66]

The Arabic word referring to a movement with a self-propelled motion is the verb *sabaha* (*yasbahuna* in the text of the two verses). All the senses of the verb imply a movement that is associated with a motion that comes from the body in question. If the movement takes place in water, it is 'to swim'; it is 'to move by the action of one's own legs' if it takes place on land. For a movement that occurs in space, it is difficult to see how else this meaning implied in the word could be rendered other than by employing its original sense. Thus there seems to have been no mistranslation, for the following reasons.

-The Moon completes its rotating motion on its own axis at the same time as it revolves around the Earth, i.e. 29 1/2 days (approx.), so that it always has the same side facing us.

-The Sun takes roughly 25 days to revolve on its own axis. There are certain differences in its rotation at its equator and poles, (we shall not go into them here) but as a whole, the Sun is animated by a rotating motion.

It appears therefore that a verbal nuance in the Qur'an refers to the Sun and Moon's own motion. These motions of the two celestial bodies are confirmed by the data of modern science, and it is inconceivable that a man living in the Seventh century A.D.-however knowledgeable he might have been in his day (and this was certainly not true in Muhammad's case) -could have imagined them.

This view is sometimes contested by examples from great thinkers of antiquity who indisputably predicted certain data that modern science has verified. They could hardly have relied on scientific deduction however; their method of procedure was more one of philosophical reasoning. Thus the case of the pythagoreans is often advanced. In the Sixth century B.C., they defended the theory of the rotation of the Earth on its own axis and the movement of the planets around the Sun. This theory was to be confirmed by modern science. By comparing it with the case of the Pythagoreans, it is easy to put forward the hypothesis of Muhammad as being a brilliant thinker, who was supposed to have imagined all on his own what modern science was to discover centuries later. In so doing however, people quite simply forget to mention the other aspect of what these geniuses of philosophical reasoning produced, i.e. the colossal blunders that litter their work. It must be remembered for example, that the Pythagoreans also defended the theory whereby the Sun was fixed in space; they made it the centre of the world and only conceived of a celestial order that was centered on it. It is quite common in the works of the great philosophers of antiquity to find a mixture of valid and invalid ideas about the Universe. The brilliance of these human works comes from the advanced ideas they contain, but they should not make us overlook the mistaken concepts which have also been left to us. From a strictly scientific point of view, this is what distinguished them from the Qur'an. In the latter, many subjects are referred to that have a bearing on modern knowledge without one of them containing a statement that contradicts what has been established by present-day science.

The Sequence of Day and Night.

At a time when it was held that the Earth was the centre of the world and that the Sun moved in relation to it, how could any one have failed to refer to the Sun's movement when talking of the sequence of night and day? This is not however referred to in the Qur'an and the subject is dealt with as follows:

--sura 7, verse 54:

"(God) covers the day with the night which is in haste to follow it . . ."

--sura 36, verse 37:

"And a sign for them (human beings) is the night. We strip it of the day and they are in darkness."

--sura 31, verse 29:

"Hast thou not seen how God merges the night into the day and merges the day into the night."

--sura 39, verse 5:

". . . He coils the night upon the day and He coils the day upon the night."

The first verse cited requires no comment. The second simply provides an image.

It is mainly the third and fourth verses quoted above that provide interesting material on the process of interpenetration and especially of winding the night upon the day and the day upon the night. (sura 39, verse 5)

'To coil' or 'to wind' seems, as in the French translation by R. Blachère, to be the best way of translating the Arabic verb *kawwara*. The original meaning of the verb is to 'coil' a turban around the head; the notion of coiling is preserved in all the other senses of the word.

What actually happens however in space? American astronauts have seen and photographed what happens from their spaceships, especially at a great distance from Earth, e.g. from the Moon. They saw how the Sun permanently lights up (except in the case of an eclipse) the half of the Earth's surface that is facing it, while the other half of the globe is in darkness. The Earth turns on its own axis and the lighting remains the same, so that an area in the form of a half-sphere makes one revolution around the Earth in twenty-four hours while the other half-sphere, that has remained in darkness, makes the same revolution in the same time. This perpetual rotation of night and day is quite clearly described in the Qur'an. It is easy for the human understanding to grasp this notion nowadays because we have the idea of the Sun's (relative) immobility and the Earth's rotation. This process of perpetual coiling, including the interpenetration of one sector by another is expressed in the Qur'an just as if the concept of the Earth's roundness had already been conceived at the time-which was obviously not the case.

Further to the above reflections on the sequence of day and night, one must also mention, with a quotation of some verses from the Qur'an, the idea that there is more than one Orient and one Occident. This is of purely descriptive interest because these phenomena rely on the most commonplace observations. The idea is mentioned here with the aim of reproducing as faithfully as possible all that the Qur'an has to say on this subject.

The following are examples:

--In sura 70 verse 40, the expression 'Lord of Orientals and Occidentals'.

--In sura 55, verse 17, the expression 'Lord of the two Orientals and the two Occidentals'.

--In sura 43, verse 38, a reference to the 'distance between the two Orientals', an image intended to express the immense size of the distance separating the two points.

Anyone who carefully watches the sunrise and sunset knows that the Sun rises at different point of the Orient and sets at different points of the Occident, according to season. Bearings taken on each of the horizons define the extreme limits that mark the two Orients and Occidents, and between these there are points marked off throughout the year. The phenomenon described here is rather commonplace, but what mainly deserves attention in this chapter are the other. topics dealt with, where the description of astronomical phenomena referred to in the Qur'an is in keeping with modern data.

D. EVOLUTION OF THE HEAVENS.

Having called modern concepts on the formation of the Universe to mind, reference was made to the evolution that took place, starting with primary nebula through to the formation of galaxies, stars and (for the solar system) the appearance of planets beginning with the Sun at a certain stage of its evolution. Modern data lead us to believe that in the solar system, and more generally in the Universe itself, this evolution is still continuing.

How can anybody who is aware of these ideas fail to make a comparison with certain statements found in the Qur'an in which the manifestations of divine Omnipotence are referred to.

The Qur'an reminds us several times that: "(God) subjected the sun and the moon: each one runs its course to an appointed term."

This sentence is to be found in sura 13, verse 2. sura 31, verse 29; sura 35, verse 13 and sura 39, verse 5.

In addition to this, the idea of a settled place is associated with the concept of a destination place in sura 36, verse 38: "The Sun runs its course to a settled place. This is the decree of the All Mighty, the Full of Knowledge."

'Settled place' is the translation of the word *mustaqarr* and there can be no doubt that the idea of an exact place is attached to it.

How do these statements fare when compared with data established by modern science?

The Qur'an gives an end to the Sun for its evolution and a destination place. It also provides the Moon with a settled place. To understand the possible meanings of these statements, we must remember what modern knowledge has to say about the evolution of the stars in general and the Sun in particular, and (by extension) the celestial bodies that automatically followed its movement through space, among them the Moon.

The Sun is a star that is roughly 4½ billion years old, according to experts in astrophysics. It is possible to distinguish a stage in its evolution, as one can for all the stars. At present, the Sun is at an early stage, characterized by the transformation of hydrogen atoms into helium atoms. Theoretically, this present stage should last another 5½ billion years according to calculations that allow a total of 10 billion years for the duration of the primary stage in a star of this kind. It has already been shown, in the case of these other stars, that this stage gives way to a second period characterized by the completion of the transformation of hydrogen into helium, with the resulting expansion of its external layers and the cooling of the Sun. In the final stage, its light is greatly diminished and density considerably increased; this is to be observed in the type of star known as a 'white dwarf'.

The above dates are only of interest in as far as they give a rough estimate of the time factor involved, what is worth remembering and is really the main point of the above, is the notion of an evolution. Modern data allow us to predict that, in a few billion years, the conditions prevailing in the solar system will not be the same as they are today. Like other stars whose transformations have been recorded until they reached their final stage, it is possible to predict an end to the Sun.

The second verse quoted above (sur'a 36, verse 38) referred to the Sun running its course towards a place of its own.

Modern astronomy has been able to locate it exactly and has even given it a name, the Solar. Apex: the solar system is indeed evolving in space towards a point situated in the Constellation of Hercules (*alpha lyrae*) whose exact location is firmly established; it is moving at a speed already ascertained at something in the region of 12 miles per. second.

All these astronomical data deserve to be mentioned in relation to the two verses from the Qur'an, since it is possible to state that they appear to agree perfectly with modern scientific data.

The Expansion of the Universe.

The expansion of the Universe is the most imposing discovery of modern science. Today it is a firmly established concept and the only debate centres around the way this is taking place.

It was first suggested by the general theory of relativity and is backed up by physics in the examination of the galactic spectrum; the regular movement towards the red section of their spectrum may be explained by the distancing of one galaxy from another. Thus the size of the Universe is probably constantly increasing and this increase will become bigger the further away the galaxies are from us. The speeds at which these celestial bodies are moving may, in the course of this perpetual expansion, go from fractions of the speed of light to speeds faster than this.

The following verse of the Qur' an (sura 51, verse 47) where God is speaking, may perhaps be compared with modern ideas:

"The heaven, We have built it with power. Verily. We are expanding it."

'Heaven' is the translation of the word *sama'* and this is exactly the extra-terrestrial world that is meant.

'We are expanding it' is the translation of the plural present participle *musi'una* of the verb *ausa'a* meaning 'to make wider, more spacious, to extend, to expand'.

Some translators who were unable to grasp the meaning of the latter provide translations that appear to me to be mistaken, e.g. "we give generously" (R. Blachère). Others sense the meaning, but are afraid to commit themselves: Hamidullah in his translation of the Qur'an talks of the widening of the heavens and space, but he includes a question mark. Finally, there are those who arm themselves with authorized scientific opinion in their commentaries and give the meaning stated here. This is true in the case of the *Muntakab*, a book of commentaries edited by the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo. It refers to the expansion of the Universe in totally unambiguous terms.

E. THE CONQUEST OF SPACE.

From this point of view, three verses of the Qur'an should command our full attention. One expresses, without any trace of ambiguity, what man should and will achieve in this field. In the other two, God refers for the sake of the unbelievers in Makka to the surprise they would have if they were able to raise themselves up to the Heavens; He alludes to a hypothesis which will not be realized for the latter.

1) The first of these verses is sura 55, verse 33: "O assembly of Jinns and Men, if you can penetrate regions of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate them! You will not penetrate them save with a Power." [67]

The translation given here needs some explanatory comment:

a) The word 'if' expresses in English a condition that is dependant upon a possibility and either an achievable or an unachievable hypothesis. Arabic is a language which is able to introduce a nuance into the condition which is much more explicit. There is one word to express the possibility (*ida*), another for the achievable hypothesis (*in*) and a third for the unachievable hypothesis expressed by the word (*lau*). The verse in question has it as an achievable hypothesis expressed by the word (*in*). The Qur'an therefore suggests the material possibility of a concrete realization. This subtle linguistic distinction formally rules out the purely mystic interpretation that some people have (quite wrongly) put on this verse.

b) God is addressing the spirits (*jinn*) and human beings (*ins*), and not essentially allegorical figures.

c) 'To penetrate' is the translation of the verb *nafada* followed by the preposition *min*. According to Kazimirski's dictionary, the phrase means 'to pass right through and come out on the other side of a body' (e.g. an arrow that comes out on the other side). It therefore suggests a deep penetration and emergence at the other end into the regions in question.

d) The Power (*sultan*) these men will have to achieve this enterprise would seem to come from the All-Mighty.

There can be no doubt that this verse indicates the possibility men will one day achieve what we today call (perhaps rather improperly) 'the conquest of space'. One must note that the text of the Qur'an predicts not only penetration through the regions of the Heavens, but also the Earth, i.e. the exploration of its depths.

2) The other two verses are taken from sura 15, (verses 14 and 15). God is speaking of the unbelievers in Makka, as the context of this passage in the sura shows:

"Even if We opened unto them a gate to Heaven and they were to continue ascending therein, they would say. our sight is confused as in drunkenness. Nay, we are people bewitched."

The above expresses astonishment at a remarkable spectacle, different from anything man could imagine. The conditional sentence is introduced here by the word *lau* which expresses a hypothesis that could never be realized as far as it concerned the people mentioned in these verses.

When talking of the conquest of space therefore, we have two passages in the text of the Qur'an: one of them refers to what will one day become a reality thanks to the powers of intelligence and ingenuity God will give to man, and the other describes an event that the unbelievers in Makka will never witness, hence its character of a condition never to be realized. The event will however be seen by others, as intimated in the first verse quoted above. It describes the human reactions to the unexpected spectacle that travellers in space will see. their confused sight, as in drunkenness, the feeling of being bewitched . . .

This is exactly how astronauts have experienced this remarkable adventure since the first human spaceflight around the world in 1961. It is known in actual fact how once one is above the Earth's atmosphere, the Heavens no longer have the azure appearance we see from Earth, which results from phenomena of absorption of the Sun's light into the layers of the atmosphere. The human observer in space above the Earth's atmosphere sees a black sky and the Earth seems to be surrounded by a halo of bluish colour due to the same phenomena of absorption of light by the Earth's atmosphere. The Moon has no atmosphere, however, and therefore appears in its true colors against the black background of the sky. It is a completely new spectacle therefore that presents itself to men in space, and the photographs of this spectacle are well known to present-day man.

Here again, it is difficult not to be impressed, when comparing the text of the Qur'an to the data of modern science, by statements that simply cannot be ascribed to the thought of a man who lived more than fourteen centuries ago.

The Earth

As in the case of the subjects already examined, the verses of the Qur'an dealing with the Earth are dispersed throughout the Book. It is difficult to classify them, and the scheme adopted here is a personal one.

To explain them more clearly, one might begin by singling out a certain number of verses that deal with more than one subject at a time. These verses are largely general in their application and constitute an invitation extended to men to reflect on divine Beneficence by pondering on the examples provided.

Other groups of verses may be singled out which deal with more specific subjects, as follows:

- the water cycle and the seas.
- the Earth's relief.
- the Earth's atmosphere.

A. VERSES CONTAINING GENERAL STATEMENTS

Although these verses provide arguments intended to lead man to meditate on the Beneficence of God towards His creatures, here and there they contain statements that are interesting from the point of view of modern science. They are perhaps especially revealing by virtue of the fact that they do not express the varied beliefs concerning natural phenomena that were current at the time of the Qur'anic Revelation. These beliefs were later to be shown by scientific knowledge to be mistaken.

On the one hand, these verses express simple ideas readily understood by to those people to whom, for geographical reasons, the Qur'an was first directed: the inhabitants of Makka and Madina, the Bedouins of the Arabian Peninsula. On the other hand, they contain reflections of a general nature from which a more cultivated public of any time and place may learn something instructive, once it starts to think about them: this is a mark of the Qur'an's universality.

As there is apparently no classification of such verses in the Qur'an, they are presented here in the numerical order of the suras:

--sura 2, verse 22:

"(God) is the One who made the earth a couch for you and the heavens an edifice, and sent down water from the sky. He brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance. Do not join equals with God when you know."

--sura 2, verse 164:

"Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth,
In the disparity of night and day,
In the ship which runs upon the sea for the profit of mankind,
In the water which God sent down from the sky thereby reviving the earth after its death,
In the beasts of all kinds He scatters therein,
In the change of the winds and the subjected clouds between the sky and earth,
Here are Signs for people who are wise."

--sura 13, verse 3:

"(God) is the One who spread out the earth and set therein mountains standing firm and rivers. For every fruit He placed two of a pair. He covers the day with the night. Verily in this there are Signs for people who reflect."

--sura 15, verses 19 to 21. God is speaking:

"The earth, We spread it out and set thereon mountains standing firm. We caused all kind of things to grow therein in due balance. Therein We have provided you and those you do not supply with means of subsistence and there is not a thing but its stores are with Us. We do not send it down save in appointed measure."

--sura 20, verses 53 and 54:

"(God is) the One Who has made for you the earth like a cradle and inserted roads into it for you. He sent water down from the sky and thereby We brought forth pairs of plants, each separate from the other. Eat! Pasture your cattle ! Verily in this are Signs for people endued with intelligence."

--sura 27, verse 61:

"He Who made the earth an abode and set rivers in its interstices and mountains standing firm. He placed a barrier between the two seas. Is there any divinity besides God? Nay, but most people do not know."

Here a reference is made to the general stability of the Earth's crust. It is known that at the early stages of the Earth's existence before its crust cooled down, the latter was unstable. The stability of the Earth's crust is not however strictly uniform, since there are zones where earthquakes intermittently occur. As to the barrier between the two seas, it is an image which signifies that the waters of the great rivers and the waters of the sea do not mix at the level of certain large estuaries.

--sura 67, verse 15:

"(God is) the One Who made the earth docile to you. So walk upon its shoulders! Eat of His sustenance! Unto Him will be the Resurrection."

--sura 79, verses 30-33:

"After that (God) spread the earth out. Therefrom He drew out its water and its pasture. And the mountains He has firmly fixed. Goods for you and for your cattle."

In many such verses, emphasis is laid upon the importance of water and the practical consequences of its presence in the earth's soil, i.e. the fertility of the soil. There can be no doubt that in desert countries, water is the most important element governing man's survival. The reference in the Qur'an however goes beyond this geographical detail. According to scientific knowledge the character the Earth has of a planet that is rich in water is unique to the solar system, and this is exactly what is highlighted in the Qur'an. Without water, the Earth would be a dead planet like the Moon. The Qur'an gives first place to water among the natural phenomena of the Earth that it refers to. The water cycle is described with remarkable accuracy in the Qur'an.

B. THE WATER CYCLE AND THE SEAS.

When the verses of the Qur'an concerning the role of water in man's existence are read in succession today, they all appear to us to express ideas that are quite obvious. The reason for this is simple: in our day and age, we all, to a lesser or greater extent, know about the water cycle in nature.

If however, we consider the various concepts the ancients had on this subject, it becomes clear that the data in the Qur'an do not embody the mythical concepts current at the time of the Revelation which had been developed more according to philosophical speculation than observed phenomena. Although it was empirically possible to acquire on a modest scale, the useful practical knowledge necessary for the improvement of the irrigation, the concepts held on the water cycle in general would hardly be acceptable today.

Thus it would have been easy to imagine that underground water could have come from the infiltration of precipitations in the soil. In ancient times however, this idea, held by Vitruvius Polio Marcus in Rome, 1st

century B.C., was cited as an exception. For many centuries therefore (and the Qur'anic Revelation is situated during this period) man held totally inaccurate views on the water cycle.

Two specialists on this subject, G. Gastany and B. Blavoux, in their entry in the *Universalis Encyclopedia (Encyclopaedia Universalis)* under the heading *Hydrogeology* (Hydrogéologie), give an edifying history of this problem.

"In the Seventh century B.C., Thales of Miletus held the theory whereby the waters of the oceans, under the effect of winds, were thrust towards the interior of the continents; so the water fell upon the earth and penetrated into the soil. Plato shared these views and thought that the return of the waters to the oceans was via a great abyss, the 'Tartarus'. This theory had many supporters until the Eighteenth century, one of whom was Descartes. Aristotle imagined that the water vapour from the soil condensed in cool mountain caverns and formed underground lakes that fed springs. He was followed by Seneca (1st Century A.D.) and many others, until 1877, among them O. Volger . . . The first clear formulation of the water cycle must be attributed to Bernard Palissy in 1580. he claimed that underground water came from rainwater infiltrating into the soil. This theory was confirmed by E. Mariotte and P. Perrault in the Seventeenth century.

In the following passages from the Qur'an, there is no trace of the mistaken ideas that were current at the time of Muhammad:

--sura 50, verses 9 to 11:

"We[68] sent down from the sky blessed water whereby We caused to grow gardens, grains for harvest, tall palm-trees with their spathes, piled one above the other-sustenance for (Our) servants. Therewith We gave (new) life to a dead land. So will be the emergence (from the tombs)."

--sura 23, verses 18 and 19:

"We sent down water from the sky in measure and lodged it in the ground. And We certainly are able to withdraw it. Therewith for you We gave rise to gardens of palm-trees and vineyards where for you are abundant fruits and of them you eat."

--sura 15, verse 22:

"We sent forth the winds that fecundate. We cause the water to descend from the sky. We provide you with the water-you (could) not be the guardians of its reserves."

There are two possible interpretations of this last verse. The fecundating winds may be taken to be the fertilizers of plants because they carry pollen. This may, however, be a figurative expression referring by analogy to the role the wind plays in the process whereby a non-raincarrying cloud is turned into one that produces a shower of rain. This role is often referred to, as in the following verses:

--sura 35, verse 9:

"God is the One Who sends forth the winds which raised up the clouds. We drive them to a dead land. Therewith We revive the ground after its death. So will be the Resurrection."

It should be noted how the style is descriptive in the first part of the verse, then passes without transition to a declaration from God. Such sudden changes in the form of the narration are very frequent in the Qur'an.

--sura 30, verse 48:

"God is the One Who sends forth the winds which raised up the clouds. He spreads them in the sky as He wills and breaks them into fragments. Then thou seest raindrops issuing from within them. He makes them reach such of His servants as He wills. And they are rejoicing."

--sura 7, verse 57:

"(God) is the One Who sends forth the winds like heralds of His Mercy. When they have carried the heavy-laden clouds, We drive them to a dead land. Then We cause water to descend and thereby bring forth fruits of every kind. Thus We will bring forth the dead. Maybe you will remember."

--sura 25, verses 48 and 49:

"(God) is the One Who sends forth the winds like heralds of His Mercy. We cause pure water to descend in order to revive a dead land with it and to supply with drink the multitude of cattle and human beings We have created."

--sura 45, verse 5:

". . . In the provision that God sends down from the sky and thereby He revives the ground after its death and in the change (of direction) of winds, there are Signs for people who are wise."

The provision made in this last verse is in the form of the water sent down from the sky, as the context shows. The accent is on the change of the winds that modify the rain cycle.

--sura 13, verse 17:

"(God) sends water down from the sky so that the rivers flow according to their measure. The torrent bears away an increasing foam."

--sura 67, verse 30, God commands the Prophet:

"Say. Do you see if your water were to be lost in the ground, who then can supply you with gushing water?"

--sura 39, verse 21:

"Hast thou not seen that God sent water down from the sky and led it through sources into the ground? Then He caused sown fields of different colors to grow."

--sura 36, verse 34:

"Therein We placed gardens of palm-trees and vineyards and We caused water springs to gush forth."

The importance of springs and the way they are fed by rainwater conducted into them is stressed in the last three verses. It is worth pausing to examine this fact and call to mind the predominance in the Middle Ages of views such as those held by Aristotle, according to whom springs were fed by underground lakes. In his entry on *Hydrology* (Hydrologie) in the *Universalis Encyclopedia* (*Encyclopaedia Universalis*) M.R. Remenieras, a teacher at the French National School of Agronomy (Ecole nationale du Genie rural, des Eaux et Forêts), describes the main stages of hydrology and refers to the magnificent irrigation works of the ancients, particularly in the Middle East. He notes however that an empirical outlook ruled over everything, since the ideas of the time proceeded from mistaken concepts. He continues as follows:

"It was not until the Renaissance (between circa 1400 and 1600) that purely philosophical concepts gave way to research based on the objective observation of hydrologic phenomena. Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) rebelled against Aristotle's statements. Bernard Palissy, in his *Wonderful discourse on the nature of waters and fountains both natural and artificial* (*Discours admirable de la nature des eaux et fontaines tant naturelles qu'artificielles* (Paris, 1570)) gives a correct interpretation of the water cycle and especially of the way springs are fed by rainwater."

This last statement is surely exactly what is mentioned in verse 21, sura 39 describing the way rainwater is conducted into sources in the ground.

The subject of verse 43, sura 24 is rain and hail:

"Hast thou not seen that God makes the clouds move gently, then joins them together, then makes them a heap. And thou seest raindrops issuing from within it. He sends down from the sky mountains of hail, He

strikes therewith whom He wills and He turns it away from whom He wills. The flashing of its lightning almost snatches away the sight." The following passage requires some comment:

--sura 56, verses 68-70:

"Have you observed the water you drink? Do you bring it down from the rainclouds? Or do We? If it were Our will, We could make it salty. Then why are you not thankful?"

This reference to the fact that God could have made fresh water salty is a way of expressing divine Omnipotence. Another means of reminding us of the same Omnipotence is the challenge to man to make rain fall from the clouds. In modern times however, technology has surely made it possible to create rain artificially. Can one therefore oppose the statement in the Qur'an to man's ability to produce precipitations?

The answer is no, because it seems clear that one must take account of man's limitations in this field. M.A. Facy, an expert at the French Meteorological Office, wrote the following in the *Universalis Encyclopedia (Encyclopedia Universalis)* under the heading *Precipitations* (Precipitations): "It will never be possible to make rain fall from a cloud that does not have the suitable characteristics of a raincloud or one that has not yet reached the appropriate stage of evolution (maturity)". Man can never therefore hasten the precipitation process by technical means when the natural conditions for it are not present. If this were not the case, droughts would never occur in practice-which they obviously do. To have control over rain and fine weather still remains a dream therefore.

Man cannot willfully break the established cycle that maintains the circulation of water in nature. This cycle may be outlined as follows, according to modern ideas on hydrology.

The calories obtained from the Sun's rays cause the sea and those parts of the Earth's surface that are covered or soaked in water to evaporate. The water vapour that is given off rises into the atmosphere and, by condensation, forms into clouds. The winds then intervene and move the clouds thus formed over varying distances. The clouds can then either disperse without producing rain, or combine their mass with others to create even greater condensation, or they can fragment and produce rain at some stages in their evolution. When rain reaches the sea (70% of the Earth's surface is covered by seas), the cycle is soon repeated. When rain falls on the land, it may be absorbed by vegetation and thus aid the latter's growth; the vegetation in its turn gives off water and thus returns some water to the atmosphere. The rest, to a lesser or greater extent, infiltrates into the soil, whence it is either conducted through channels into the sea, or comes back to the Earth's surface. network through springs or resurgences.

When one compares the modern data of hydrology to what is contained in the numerous verses of the Qur'an quoted in this paragraph, one has to admit that there is a remarkable degree of agreement between them.

The Seas.

Whereas the above verses from the Qur'an have provided material for comparison between modern knowledge about the water cycle in nature, this is not the case for the seas. There is not a single statement in the Qur'an dealing with the seas which could be used for comparison with scientific data *per se*. This does not diminish the necessity of pointing out however that none of the statements in the Qur'an on the seas refers to the beliefs, myths or superstitions prevalent at the time of its Revelation.

A certain number of verses deal with the seas and navigation. As subjects for reflection, they provide indications of divine Omnipotence that arise from the facts of common observation. The following verses are examples of this:

--sura 14, verse 32:

"(God) has made the ship subject to you, so that it runs upon the sea at His Command."

--sura 16, verse 14:

"(God) is the One Who subjected the sea, so that you eat fresh meat from it and you extract from it ornaments which you wear. Thou seest the ships plowing the waves, so that you seek of His Bounty. Maybe, you will be thankful."

--sura 31, verse 31:

"Hast thou seen that the ship runs upon the sea by the Grace of God, in order to show you His signs. Verily in this are Signs for all who are persevering and grateful."

--sura 55, verse 24:

"His are the ships erected upon the sea like tokens."

--sura 36, verse 41-44:

"A sign for them is that We bore their offspring in the loaded Ark. We have created for them similar (vessels) on which they ride. If We will, We drown them and there is no help and they will not be saved unless by Mercy from Us and as a gratification for a time."

The reference here is quite clearly to the vessel bearing man upon the sea, just as, long ago, Noah and the other occupants of the vessel were carried in the Ark that enabled them to reach dry land.

Another observed fact concerning the sea stands out, because of its unusual nature, from the verses of the Qur'an devoted to it: three verses refer to certain characteristics shared by great rivers when they flow out into the ocean.

The phenomenon is well known and often seen whereby the immediate mixing of salty seawater and fresh riverwater does not occur. The Qur'an refers to this in the case of what is thought to be the estuary of the Tigris and Euphrates where they unite to form what one might call a 'sea' over 100 miles long, the Shatt Al Arab. At the inner parts of the gulf, the effect of the tides is to produce the welcome phenomenon of the reflux of fresh water to the interior of the dry land, thus ensuring adequate irrigation. To understand the text correctly, one has to know that the English word 'sea' conveys the general meaning of the Arabic word *bahr* which designates a large mass of water and is equally used for both the sea and the great rivers: the Nile, Tigris and Euphrates for example.

The following are the three verses that describe this phenomenon:

--sura 25, verse 53:

"(God) is the One Who has let free the two seas, one is agreeable and sweet, the other salty and bitter. He placed a barrier between them, a partition that it is forbidden to pass."

--sura 35, verse 12:

"The two seas are not alike. The water of one is agreeable, sweet, pleasant to drink. The other salty and bitter. You eat fresh meat from it and you extract from it ornaments which you wear."

--sura 55, verses 19, 20 and 22:

"He has loosed the two seas. They meet together. Between them there is a barrier which they do not transgress. Out of them come pearls and coral."

In addition to the description of the main fact, these verses refer to what may be obtained from fresh water and seawater: fish, personal adornment, i.e. coral and pearls. With regard to the phenomenon whereby the river water does not mix with seawater at the estuary, one must understand that this is not peculiar to the Tigris and Euphrates; they are not mentioned by name in the text, but it is thought to refer to them. Rivers with a very large outflow, such as the Mississippi and the Yangtze, have the same peculiarity. the mixing of their fresh water with the salty water of the sea does not often occur until very far out at sea.

C. THE EARTH'S RELIEF.

The constitution of the Earth is highly complex. Today, it is possible to imagine it very roughly as being formed of a deep layer, at very high temperature, and especially of a central area where rocks are still in fusion, and of a surface layer, the Earth's crust which is solid and cold. The crust is very thin; its thickness is estimated in units of miles or units of ten miles at the most. The Earth's radius is however slightly over 3,750 miles, so that its crust does not represent (on average) one hundredth of the of the sphere's radius. It is upon this skin, as it were, that all geological phenomena have taken place. At the origin of these phenomena are folds that were to form the mountain ranges; their formation is called 'orogenesis' in geology. the process is of considerable importance because with the development of a relief that was to constitute a mountain, the Earth's crust was driven in proportionately far down: this process ensures a foundation in the layer that underlies it.

The history of the distribution of the sea and land on the surface of the globe has only recently been established and is still very incomplete, even for the most recent and best known periods. It is likely that the oceans appeared and formed the hydrosphere circa half a billion years ago. The continents were probably a single mass at the end of the primary era, then subsequently broke apart. Some continents or parts of continents have moreover emerged through the formation of mountains in maritime zones (e.g. the North Atlantic continent and part of Europe).

According to modern ideas, the dominating factor in the formation of the land that emerged was the development of mountain ranges. The evolution of the land, from the primary to the quaternary era, is classed according to 'orogenic phases' that are themselves grouped into 'cycles' of the same name since the formation of all mountains reliefs had repercussions on the balance between the sea and the continents. It made some parts of the land disappear and others emerge, and for hundreds of millions of years it has altered the surface distribution of the continents and oceans: the former at present only occupying three tenths of the surface of this planet.

In this way it is possible to give a very rough outline of the transformations that have taken place over the last hundreds of millions of years.

When referring to the Earth's relief, the Qur'an only describes, as it were, the formation of the mountains. Seen from the present point of view, there is indeed little one can say about the verses that only express God's Beneficence to man with regard to the Earth's formation, as in the following verses:

--sura 71, verses 19 and 20:

"For you God made the earth a carpet so that you travel along its roads and the paths of valleys."

--sura 51, verse 48:

"The earth, We have spread it out. How excellently We did that."

The carpet which has been spread out is the Earth's crust, a solidified shell on which we can live, since the globe's sub-strata are very hot, fluid and hostile to any form of life.

The statements in the Qur'an referring to the mountains and the references to their stability subsequent to the phenomenon of the folds are very important.

--sura 88, verses 19 & 20. The context invites unbelievers to consider certain natural phenomena, among them:

". . . the mountains, how they have been pitched (like a tent).
The Earth how it was made even."

The following verses give details about the way in which the mountains were anchored in the ground:

--sura 78, verses 6 & 7:

"Have We not made the earth an expanse and the mountains stakes."

The stakes referred to are the ones used to anchor a tent in the ground (*autad*, plural of *watad*).

Modern geologists describe the folds in the Earth as giving foundations to the mountains, and their dimensions go roughly one mile to roughly 10 miles. The stability of the Earth's crust results from the phenomenon of these folds.

So it is not surprising to find reflections on the mountains in certain passages of the Qur'an, such as the following:

--sura 79, verse 32:

"And the mountains (God) has fixed them firmly."

--sura 31, verse 10:

"(God) has cast into the ground (mountains) standing firm, so that it does not shake with you."

The same phrase is repeated in sura 16, verse 15; and the same idea is expressed with hardly any change in sura 21, verse 31:

"We have placed in the ground (mountains) standing firm so that it does not shake with them."

These verses express the idea that the way the mountains are laid out ensures stability and is in complete agreement with geological data.

D. THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE.

In addition to certain statements specifically relating to the sky, examined in the preceding chapter, the Qur'an contains several passages dealing with the phenomena that occur in the atmosphere. As for the comparison between them and the data of modern science, it is to be noted here, as elsewhere, that there is absolutely no contradiction between today's modern scientific knowledge and the phenomena described.

Altitude.

A familiar feeling of discomfort experienced at high altitude, which increases the higher one climbs, is expressed in verse 125, sura 6:

"Those whom God wills to guide, He opens their breast to Islam. Those whom He wills lose their way, He makes their breast narrow and constricted, as if they were climbing in the sky."

Some commentators have claimed that the notion of discomfort at high altitude was unknown to the Arabs of Muhammad's time. It appears that this was not true at all: the existence on the Arabian Peninsula of peaks rising over two miles high makes it extremely implausible that they should not have known of the difficulty of breathing at high altitude.[69] Others have seen in this verse a prediction of the conquest of space, an opinion that appears to require categorical denial, at least for this passage.

Electricity in the Atmosphere.

Electricity in the atmosphere and the consequences of this, i.e.

lightning and hail, are referred to in the following verses:

--sura 13, verses 12-13:

"(God) is the One Who shows you the lightning, with fear and covetousness. He raised up the heavy clouds. The thunder glorifies His Praise and so do the angels for awe. He sends the thunder-bolt and strikes with them who He wills while they are disputing about God. He is All Mighty in His Power."

--sura 24, verse 43 (already quoted in this chapter):

"Hast thou not seen that God makes the clouds move gently, then joins them together, then makes them a heap. And thou seest raindrops issuing from within it. He sends down from the sky mountains of hail, He strikes therewith whom He wills and He turns it away from whom He wills. The flashing of its lightning almost snatches away the sight."

In these two verses there is the expression of an obvious correlation between the formation of heavy rainclouds or clouds containing hail and the occurrence of lightning. the former, the subject of covetousness on account of the benefit it represents and the latter, the subject of fear, because when it falls, it is at the will of the All-Mighty. The connection between the two phenomena is verified by present-day knowledge of electricity in the atmosphere.

Shadows.

The phenomenon of shadows and the fact that they move is very simply explained today. It forms the subject of the following observations:

-sura 16, verse 81:

"Out of the things He created, God has given you shade . . ."

--sura 16, verse 48:

"Have (the Unbelievers) not observed that for all the things God created, how their shadow shifts right and left, prostrating themselves to God while they are full of humility."

--sura 25, verses 45 and 46:

"Hast thou not seen how thy Lord has spread the shade. If He willed, He could have made it stationary. Moreover We made the sun its guide and We withdraw it towards Us easily."

Apart from the phrases dealing with the humility before God of all the things He created, including their shadow, and the fact that God can take back all manifestations of His Power, as He wills, the text of the Qur'an refers to the relationship between the Sun and the shadows. One must bear in mind at this point the fact that, in Muhammad's day, it was believed that the way a shadow moved was governed by the movement of the sun from east to west. This principle was applied in the case of the sundial to measure the time between sunrise and sunset. In this instance, the Qur'an speaks of the phenomenon without referring to the explanation current at the time of the Revelation. It would have been readily accepted for many centuries by those who came after Muhammad. In the end however, it would have been shown to be inaccurate. The Qur'an only talks moreover of the function the sun has as an indicator of shadow. Evidently there is no contradiction between the way the Qur'an describes shadow and what we know of this phenomenon in modern times.

The Animal and Vegetable Kingdoms

Numerous verses describing the origins of life have been assembled in this chapter, along with certain aspects of the vegetable kingdom and general or specific topics relating to the animal kingdom. The grouping of verses scattered throughout the Book affords a general view of the data the Qur'an contains on these subjects.

In the case of the subject of this and the following chapter, the examination of the Qur'anic text has sometimes been particularly delicate on account of certain difficulties inherent in the vocabulary. These have only been overcome through the fact that scientific data which have a bearing on the subject have been taken into consideration. It is particularly so in the case of living beings, i.e. animal, vegetable and human, where a confrontation with the teachings of science is shown to be indispensable in the search for the meaning of certain statements on these topics contained in the Qur'an.

It will become clear that numerous translations of these passages in the Qur'an, made by men of letters, must be deemed inaccurate by the scientist. The same holds true for commentaries made by those who do not possess the scientific knowledge necessary for an understanding of the text.

A. THE ORIGINS OF LIFE.

This question has always preoccupied man, both for himself and for the living things around him. It will be examined here from a general point of view. The case of man, whose appearance on Earth and reproduction processes are the subject of lengthy exposés, will be dealt with in the next chapter.

When the Qur'an describes the origins of life on a very broad basis, it is extremely concise. It does so in a verse that also mentions the process of the formation of the Universe, already quoted and commented on:

--sura 21, verse 30:

"Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, then We clove them asunder and We got every living thing out of the water. Will they then not believe?"

The notion of 'getting something out of something' does not give rise to any doubts. The phrase can equally mean that every living thing was made of water (as its essential component) or that every living thing originated in water. The two possible meanings are strictly in accordance with scientific data. Life is in fact of aquatic origin and water is the major component of all living cells. Without water, life is not possible. When the possibility of life on another planet is discussed, the first question is always: does it contain a sufficient quantity of water to support life?

Modern data lead us to think that the oldest living being must have belonged to the vegetable kingdom: algae have been found that date from the pre-Cambrian period, i.e. the time of the oldest known lands. Organisms belonging to the animal kingdom probably appeared slightly later. They too came from the sea.

What has been translated here by 'water' is the word *ma'* which means both water in the sky and water in the sea, plus any kind of liquid. In the first meaning, water is the element necessary to all vegetable life:

--sura 20, verse 53.

"(God is the One Who) sent water down from the sky and thereby We brought forth pairs of plants each separate from the other."

This is the first reference to the notion of a pair in the vegetable kingdom. We shall return to this later.

In the second meaning, a liquid without any further indication of what kind, the word is used in its indeterminate form to designate what is at the basis of the formation of all animal life:

-sura 24, verse 45:

"God created every animal from water."

We shall see further on how this word may also be applied to seminal fluid[70].

Whether it deals therefore with the origins of life in general, or the element that gives birth to plants in the soil, or the seed of animals, all the statements contained in the Qur'an on the origin of life are strictly in accordance with modern scientific data. None of the myths on the origins of life that abounded at the time the Qur'an appeared are mentioned in the text.

B. THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM.

It is not possible to quote in their entirety all the numerous passages in the Qur'an in which divine Beneficence is referred to concerning the salutary effect of the rain which makes vegetation grow. Here are just three verses on this subject:

--sura 16, verses 10 and 11:

"(God) is the One Who sends water down from the sky. For you this is a drink and out of it (grow) shrubs in which you let (cattle) graze freely. Therewith for you He makes sown fields, olives, palm-trees, vineyards and all kinds of fruit grow."

--sura 6, verse 99:

"(God) is the One Who sent water down from the sky. Therewith We brought forth plants of all kinds and from them the verdure and We brought forth from it the clustered grains, and from the palm-tree its spathes with bunches of dates (hanging) low, the gardens of grapes, olives and pomegranates similar and different. Look at their fruit, when they bear it, and their ripening. Verily, in that there are signs for people who believe."

--sura 50, verses 9-11:

"We sent down from the sky blessed water whereby We caused to grow gardens, grains for harvest, tall palm-trees with their spathes, piled one above the other-sustenance for (Our) servants. Therewith We give (new) life to a dead land. So will be the emergence (from the tombs)."

The Qur'an adds to these general data others that refer to more specialized subjects:

Balance in the Vegetable Kingdom

--sura 15, verse 19:

"The earth . . . We caused all kinds of things to grow therein in due balance."

The Different Qualities of Various Foods

--sura 13, verse 4:

"On the earth are adjacent parts; vineyards, sown fields, palm-trees, similar and not similar, watered with

the same water. We make some of them more excellent than others to eat and verily in this are signs for wise people."

It is interesting to note the existence of these verses because they show the sober quality of the terms used, and the absence of any description that might highlight the beliefs of the times, rather than fundamental truths. What particularly attracts our attention however, are the statements in the Qur'an concerning reproduction in the vegetable kingdom.

Reproduction in the Vegetable Kingdom

One must bear in mind that there are two methods of reproduction in the vegetable kingdom: one sexual, the other asexual. It is only the first which in fact deserves the term 'reproduction', because this defines a biological process whose purpose is the appearance of a new individual identical to the one that gave it birth.

Asexual reproduction is quite simply multiplication. It is the result of the fragmentation of an organism which has separated from the main plant and developed in such a way as to resemble the plant from which it came. It is considered by Guilliermond and Mangenot to be a 'special case of growth'. A very simple example of this is the cutting. a cutting taken from a plant is placed in suitably watered soil and regenerated by the growth of new roots. Some plants have organs specially designed for this, while others give off spores that behave like seeds, as it were, (it should be remembered that seeds are the results of a process of sexual reproduction).

Sexual reproduction in the vegetable kingdom is carried out by the coupling of the male and female parts of the generic formations united on a same plant or located on separate plants.

This is the only form that is mentioned in the Qur'an.

-sura 20, verse 53:

"(God is the One Who) sent water down from the sky and thereby We brought forth pairs of plants each separate from the other."

'One of a pair' is the translation of *zauj* (plural *azwaj*) whose original meaning is: 'that which, in the company of another, forms a pair'; the word is used just as readily for a married couple as for a pair of shoes.

--sura 22, verse 5:

"Thou seest the grounds lifeless. When We send down water thereon it shakes and grows and puts forth every magnificent pair (of plants)."

--sura 31, verse 10:

"We caused to grow (on the earth) every noble pair (of plants)."

--sura 13, verse 3:

"Of all fruits (God) placed (on the earth) two of a pair."

We know that fruit is the end-product of the reproduction process of superior plants which have the most highly developed and complex organization. The stage preceding fruit is the flower, which has male and female organs (stamens and ovules). The latter, once pollen has been carried to them, bear fruit which in turn matures and frees it seeds. All fruit therefore implies the existence of male and female organs. This is the meaning of the verse in the Qur'an.

It must be noted that for certain species, fruit can come from non-fertilized flowers (parthenocarpic fruit), e.g. bananas, certain types of pineapple, fig, orange, and vine. They can nevertheless also come from plants that have definite sexual characteristics.

The culmination of the reproductive process comes with the germination of the seed once its outside casing is opened (sometimes it is compacted into a fruit-stone). This opening allows roots to emerge which draw from the soil all that is necessary for the plant's slowed-down life as a seed while it grows and produces a new plant.

A verse in the Qur'an refers to this process of germination:

--sura 6, verse 95:

"Verily, God splits the grain and the fruit-stone."

The Qur'an often restates the existence of these components of a pair in the vegetable kingdom and brings the notion of a couple into a more general context, without set limits:

--sura 36, Verse 36:

"Glory be to Him Who created the components of couples of every kind: of what the ground caused to grow, of themselves (human beings) and of what you do not know."

One could form many hypotheses concerning the meaning of the 'things men did not know' in Muhammad's day. Today we can distinguish structures or coupled functions for them, going from the infinitesimally small to the infinitely large, in the living as well as the non-living world. The point is to remember these clearly expressed ideas and note, once again, that they are in perfect agreement with modern science.

C. THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

There are several questions in the Qur'an concerning the animal kingdom which are the subject of comments that call for a confrontation with modern scientific knowledge. Here again, however, one would gain an incomplete view of all that the Qur'an contains on this subject if one were to leave out a passage such as the extract which follows. In this passage, the creation of certain elements in the animal kingdom is described with the purpose of making man reflect upon the divine Beneficence extended to him. It is quoted basically to provide an example of the way in which the Qur'an describes the harmonious adaptation of Creation to man's needs; it relates in particular the case of those people who live in a rural setting, since there is nothing that could be examined from a different point of view.

-sura 16, verses 5 to 8:

"(God) created cattle for you and (you find) in them warmth, useful services and food, sense of beauty when you bring them home and when you take them to pasture. They bear your heavy loads to lands you could not reach except with great personal effort. Verily, your Lord is Compassionate and Merciful; (He created) horses, mules and donkeys for you to ride and for ornament. And He created what you do not know."

Alongside these general remarks, the Qur'an sets out certain data on highly diversified subjects:

--reproduction in the animal kingdom.

--references to the existence of animal communities.

--statements concerning bees, spiders and birds.

--remarks on the source of constituents of animal milk.

1. Reproduction in the Animal Kingdom.

This is very summarily dealt with in verses 45 and 46, sura 53:

"(God) fashioned the two of a pair, the male and the female, from a small quantity of liquid when it is poured out."

The 'pair' is the same expression that we have already encountered in the verses which deal with reproduction in the vegetable kingdom. Here, the sexes are given. The detail which is absolutely remarkable is the precision with which it is stated that a small quantity of liquid is required for reproduction. The word itself signifying 'sperm' is used. The relevance of this remark will be commented upon in the next chapter.

2. References to the Existence of Animal Communities.

--sura 6, Verse 38:

"There is no animal on earth, no bird which flies on wings, that (does not belong to) communities like you. We have not neglected anything in the Book (of Decrees). Then to their Lord they will be gathered."

There are several points in this verse which require comment. Firstly, it would seem that there is a description of what happens to animals after their death: Islam does not apparently, have any doctrine on this point. Then there is predestination in general^[71] which would seem to be mentioned here. It could be conceived as absolute predestination or relative, i.e. limited to structures and a functional organization that condition modes of behaviour: the animal acts upon various exterior impulses in terms of a particular conditioning.

Blachère states that an older commentator, such as Razi, thought that this verse only referred to instinctive actions whereby animals worship God. Sheik Si Boubakeur Hamza, in the commentary to his translation of the Koran, speaks of "the instinct which, according to Divine Wisdom, pushes all beings to group together, so that they demand that the work of each member serve the whole group."

Animal behaviour has been closely investigated in recent decades, with the result that genuine animal communities have been shown to exist. Of course, for a long time now the results of a group or community's work have been examined and this has led to the acceptance of a community organization. It has only been recently however, that the mechanisms which preside over this kind of organization have been discovered for certain species. The most studied and best known case is undoubtedly that of bees, to whose behaviour the name von Frisch is linked. Von Frisch, Lorenz and Tinbergen received the 1973 Nobel Prize for their work in this field.

3. Statements Concerning Bees, Spiders and Birds.

When specialists on the nervous system wish to provide striking examples of the prodigious organization directing animal behaviour, possibly the animals referred to most frequently are bees, spiders and birds (especially migratory birds). Whatever the case, there is no doubt that these three groups constitute a model of highly evolved organization.

The fact that the text of the Qur'an refers to this exemplary trio in the animal kingdom is in absolute keeping with the exceptionally interesting character that each of these animals has from a scientific point of view.

Bees

In the Qur'an, bees are the subject of the longest commentary:

--Sura 16, verses 68 and 69:[72]

"Thy Lord inspired the bees: Choose your dwelling in the hills, in the trees and in what (man) built. Eat of all fruit and follow the ways of your Lord in humility. From within their bodies comes a liquor of different colours where is a remedy for men."

It is difficult to know what exactly is meant by the order to follow the ways of the Lord in humility, unless it is to be seen in general terms. All that may be said, with regard to the knowledge that has been gained of their behaviour, is that here-as in each of the three animal cases mentioned as examples in the Qur'an-there is a remarkable nervous organization supporting their behaviour. It is known that the pattern of a bee's dance is a means of communication to other bees; in this way, bees are able to convey to their own species the direction and distance of flowers from which nectar is to be gathered. The famous experiment performed by von Frisch has shown the meaning of this insect's movement which is intended to transmit information between worker bees.

Spiders

Spiders are mentioned in the Qur'an to stress the flimsiness of their dwelling which is the most fragile of all. They have a refuge that is as precarious, according to the Qur'an, as the dwelling of those who have chosen masters other than God.

--sura 29, verse 41:

"Those who choose masters other than God are like the spider when it takes for itself a dwelling. Verily, the flimsiest dwelling is the dwelling of the spider. If they but knew."

A spider's web is indeed constituted of silken threads secreted by the animal's glands and their calibre is infinitely fine. Its fragility cannot be imitated by man. Naturalists are intrigued by the extraordinary pattern of work recorded by the animal's nervous cells, which allows it to produce a geometrically perfect web.

Birds

Birds are frequently mentioned in the Qur'an. They appear in episodes in the life of Abraham, Joseph, David, Solomon and Jesus. These references do not however have any bearing on the subject in hand.

The verse concerning the existence of animal communities on the ground and bird communities in the sky has been noted above:

--sura 6 verse 38:

"There is no animal on the earth, no bird which flies on wings, that (does not belong to) communities like you. We have not neglected anything in the Book (of Decrees) . Then to their Lord they will be gathered."

Two other verses highlight the birds' strict submission to God's Power.

--sura 16, verse 79:

"Do they not look at the birds subjected in the atmosphere of the sky? None can hold them up (in His Power) except God."

--sura 67, verse 19:

"Have they not looked at the birds above them spreading their wings out and folding them? None can hold them up (in his Power) except the Beneficent." The translation of one single word in each of these verses is a very delicate matter. The translation given here expresses the idea that God holds the birds up in His Power.

The Arabic verb in question is *amsaka*, whose original meaning is 'to put one's hand on, seize, hold, hold someone back'.

An illuminating comparison can be made between these verses, which stress the extremely close dependence of the birds' behavior on divine order, to modern data showing the degree of perfection attained by certain species of bird with regard to the programming of their movements. It is only the existence of a migratory programme in the genetic code of birds that can account for the extremely long and complicated journeys which very young birds, without any prior experience and without any guide, are able to accomplish. This is in addition to their ability to return to their departure point on a prescribed date. Professor Hamburger in his book, *Power and Fragility* (La Puissance et la Fragilité)[73], gives as an example the well-known case of the 'mutton-bird' that lives in the Pacific, with its journey of over 16,500 miles in the shape of the figure 8[74]. It must be acknowledged that the highly complicated instructions for a journey of this kind simply have to be contained in the bird's nervous cells. They are most definitely programmed, but who is the programmer?

4. The Source of the Constituents of Animal Milk.

This is defined in the Qur'an in strict accordance with the data of modern knowledge (sura 16, verse 66). The translation and interpretation of this verse given here is my own because even modern translations habitually give it a meaning which is, in my opinion, hardly acceptable. Here are two examples:

--R. Blachère's translation:[75]

"Verily, in your cattle there is a lesson for you! We give you a pure milk to drink, excellent for its drinkers; (it comes) from what, in their bellies, is between digested food and blood."

--Professor Hamidullah's translation:[76]

"Verily, there is food for thought in your cattle. From what is in their bellies, among their excrement and blood, We make you drink pure milk, easy for drinkers to imbibe."

If these texts were shown to a physiologist, he would reply that they were extremely obscure, the reason being that there hardly appears to be much agreement between them and modern notions, even on a very elementary level. These translations are the work of highly eminent Arabists. It is a well known fact however, that a translator, even an expert, is liable to make mistakes in the translation of scientific statements, unless he happens to be a specialist in the discipline in question.

The most valid translation seems to me to be the following:

"Verily, in cattle there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of what is inside their bodies, coming from a conjunction between the contents of the intestine and the blood, a milk pure and pleasant for those who drink it." (sura 16, verse 66)

This interpretation is very close to the one given in the *Muntakab*, 1973, edited by the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo, which relies for its support on modern physiology.

From the point of view of its vocabulary, the proposed translation may be justified as follows:

I have translated «inside their bodies' and not, as R. Blachère and Professor Hamidullah have done, 'inside their bellies'. This is because the word *batn* also means 'middle', «interior of something', as well as 'belly'. The word does not here have a meaning that is anatomically precise. 'Inside their bodies' seems to concur perfectly with the context.

The notion of a 'primary origin' of the constituents of milk is expressed by the word *min* (in English 'from') and the idea of a conjunction by the word *baini*. The latter not only signifies «among' but also 'between' in the

other translations quoted. It is however also used to express the idea that two things or two people are brought together.

From a scientific point of view, physiological notions must be called upon to grasp the meaning of this verse.

The substances that ensure the general nutrition of the body come from chemical transformations which occur along the length of the digestive tract. These substances come from the contents of the intestine. On arrival in the intestine at the appropriate stage of chemical transformation, they pass through its wall and towards the systemic circulation. This passage is effected in two ways: either directly, by what are called the 'lymphatic vessels', or indirectly, by the portal circulation. This conducts them first to the liver, where they undergo alterations, and from here they then emerge to join the systemic circulation. In this way everything passes through the bloodstream.

The constituents of milk are secreted by the mammary glands. These are nourished, as it were, by the product of food digestion brought to them via the bloodstream. Blood therefore plays the role of collector and conductor of what has been extracted from food, and it brings nutrition to the mammary glands, the producers of milk, as it does to any other organ.

Here the initial process which sets everything else in motion is the bringing together of the contents of the intestine and blood at the level of the intestinal wall itself. This very precise concept is the result of the discoveries made in the chemistry and physiology of the digestive system. It was totally unknown at the time of the Prophet Muhammad and has been understood only in recent times. The discovery of the circulation of the blood, was made by Harvey roughly ten centuries after the Qur'anic Revelation.

I consider that the existence in the Qur'an of the verse referring to these concepts can have no human explanation on account of the period in which they were formulated.

Human Reproduction

From the moment ancient human writings enter into detail (however slight) on the subject of reproduction, they inevitably make statements that are inaccurate. In the Middle Ages-and even in more recent time-reproduction was surrounded by all sorts of myths and superstitions. How could it have been otherwise, considering the fact that to understand its complex mechanisms, man first had to possess a knowledge of anatomy, the discovery of the microscope had to be made, and the so-called basic sciences had to be founded which were to nurture physiology, embryology, obstetrics, etc.

The situation is quite different in the Qur'an. The Book mentions precise mechanisms in many places and describes clearly-defined stages in reproduction, without providing a single statement marred by inaccuracy. Everything in the Qur'an is explained in simple terms which are easily understandable to man and in strict accordance with what was to be discovered much later on.

Human reproduction is referred to in several dozen verses of the Qur'an, in various contexts. It is explained through statements which deal with one or more specific points. They must be assembled to give a general idea of the verses as a whole, and here, as for the other subjects already examined, the commentary is in this way made easier.

REMINDER OF CERTAIN BASIC CONCEPTS.

It is imperative to recall certain basic concepts which were unknown at the time of the Qur'anic Revelation and the centuries that followed.

Human reproduction is effected by a series of processes which we share in common with mammals. The starting point is the fertilization of an ovule which has detached itself from the ovary.

It takes place in the Fallopian tubes half-way through the menstrual cycle. The fertilizing agent is the male sperm, or more exactly, the spermatozoon, a single fertilizing cell being all that is needed. To ensure fertilization therefore, an infinitely small quantity of spermatogenic liquid containing a large number of spermatozoons (tens of millions at a time) is required. This liquid is produced by the testicles and temporarily stored in a system of reservoirs and canals that finally lead into the urinary tract; other glands are situated along the latter which contribute their own additional secretions to the sperm itself.

The implantation of the egg fertilized by this process takes place at a precise spot in the female reproductive system: it descends into the uterus via a Fallopian tube and lodges in the body of the uterus where it soon literally implants itself by insertion into the thickness of the mucosa and of the muscle, once the placenta has been formed and with the aid of the latter. If the implantation of the fertilized egg takes place, for example, in the Fallopian tubes instead of in the uterus, pregnancy will be interrupted.

Once the embryo begins to be observable to the naked eye, it looks like a small mass of flesh at the centre of which the appearance of a human being is at first indistinguishable. It grows there in progressive stages which are very well known today; they lead to the bone structure, the muscles, the nervous system, the circulation, and the viscerae, etc.

These notions will serve as the terms of reference against which the statements in the Qur'an on reproduction are to be compared.

HUMAN REPRODUCTION IN THE QUR'AN.

It is not easy to gain an idea of what the Qur'an contains on this subject. The first difficulty arises from the fact already mentioned, i.e. that the statements dealing with this subject are scattered throughout the Book. This is not however a major difficulty. What is more likely to mislead the inquiring reader is, once again, the problem of vocabulary.

In fact there are still many translations and commentaries in circulation today that can give a completely false idea of the Qur'anic Revelation on this subject to the scientist who reads them. The majority of translations describe, for example, man's formation from a 'blood clot' or an 'adhesion'. A statement of this kind is totally unacceptable to scientists specializing in this field. In the paragraph dealing with the implantation of the egg in the maternal uterus, we shall see the reasons why distinguished Arabists who lack a scientific background have made such blunders.

This observation implies how great the importance of an association between linguistic and scientific knowledge is when it comes to grasping the meaning of Qur'anic statements on reproduction.

The Qur'an sets out by stressing the successive transformations the embryo undergoes before reaching its destination in the maternal uterus.

--sura 82, verses 6 to 8:

"O Man! Who deceives you about your Lord the Noble, Who created you and fashioned you in due proportion and gave you any form He willed."

--sura 71, verse 14:

"(God) fashioned you in (different) stages."

Along with this very general observation, the text of the Qur'an draws attention to several points concerning reproduction which might be listed as follows:

- 1) fertilization is performed by only a very small volume of liquid.
- 2) the constituents of the fertilizing liquid.
- 3) the implantation of the fertilized egg.
- 4) the evolution of the embryo.

1. Fertilization is Performed by Only a Very Small Volume of Liquid.

The Qur'an repeats this concept eleven times using the following expression:

--sura 16, verse 4:

"(God) fashioned man from a small quantity (of sperm)."

The Arabic word *nutfā* has been translated by the words 'small quantity (of sperm)' because we do not have the terms that are strictly appropriate. This word comes from a verb signifying 'to dribble, to trickle'; it is used to describe what remains at the bottom of a bucket that has been emptied out. It therefore indicates a very small quantity of liquid. Here it is sperm because the word is associated in another verse with the word sperm.

--sura 75, verse 37:

"Was (man) not a small quantity of sperm which has been poured out?"

Here the Arabic word *mani* signifies sperm.

Another verse indicates that the small quantity in question is put in a 'firmly established lodging' (*qarar*) which obviously means the genital organs.

--sura 23, verse 13. God is speaking:

"Then We placed (man) as a small quantity (of sperm) in a safe lodging firmly established."

It must be added that the adjective which in this text refers to the 'firmly established lodging' *makīn* is, I think, hardly translatable. It expresses the idea of a firmly established and respected place. However this may be, it refers to the spot where man grows in the maternal organism. It IS important to stress the concept of a very small quantity of liquid needed in the fertilization process, which is strictly in agreement with what we know on this subject today.

2. The Constituents of the Fertilizing Liquid.

The Qur'an describes the liquid enabling fertilization to take place in terms which it is interesting to examine:

- a) 'sperm', as has been stated precisely (sura 75, verse 37)
- b) 'a liquid poured out'. "Man was fashioned from a liquid poured out" (sura 86, verse 6)
- c) 'a despised liquid' (sura 32, verse 8 and sura 77, verse 20)

The adjective 'despised' (*mahīn*) would, it seems, be interpreted not so much on account of the nature of the liquid itself, as more the fact that it is emitted through the outlet of the urinary tract, using the channels that are employed for passing urine.

d) 'Mixtures' or 'mingled liquids' (*amsaj*): "Verily, we fashioned man from a small quantity of mingled liquids" (sura 76, verse 2)

Many commentators, like professor Hamidullah, consider these liquids to be the male and female agents. The same view was shared by older commentators, who could not have had any idea of the physiology of fertilization, especially its biological conditions in the case of the woman. They thought that the word simply meant the unification of the two elements.

Modern authors however, like the commentator of the *Muntakab* edited by the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo, have corrected this view and note here that the 'small quantity of sperm' is made up of various component parts. The commentator in the *Muntakab* does not go into detail, but in my opinion it is a very judicious observation.

What are the components parts of sperm?

Spermatic liquid is formed by various secretions which come from the following glands:

- a) the testicles: the secretion of the male genital gland contains spermatozoons, which are elongated cells with a long flagellum; they are bathed in a sero-fluid liquid.
- b) the seminal vesicles. these organs are reservoirs of spermatozoons and are placed near the prostate gland; they also secrete their own liquid but it does not contain any fertilizing agents.
- c) the prostate gland: this secretes a liquid which gives the sperm its creamy texture and characteristic odour.
- d) the glands annexed to the urinary tract: Cooper's or Méry's glands secrete a stringy liquid and Littré's glands give off mucous.

These are the origins of the 'mingled liquids' which the Qur'an would appear to refer to.

There is, however, more to be said on this subject. When the Qur'an talks of a fertilizing liquid composed of different components, it also informs us that man's progeny will be maintained by something which may be extracted from this liquid.

This is the meaning of verse 8, sura 32:

"(God) made his progeny from the quintessence of a despised liquid."

The Arabic word, translated here by the word 'quintessence', is *sulala*. It signifies 'something which is extracted, the issue of something else, the best part of a thing'. In whatever way it is translated, it refers to a part of a whole.

Fertilization of the egg and reproduction are produced by a cell that is very elongated: its dimensions are measured in ten thousandths of a millimetre. In normal conditions^[77], only one single cell among several tens of millions produced by a man will actually penetrate the ovule; a large number of them are left behind and never complete the journey which leads from the vagina to the ovule, passing through the uterus and Fallopian tubes. It is therefore an infinitesimally small part of the extract from a liquid whose composition is highly complex which actually fulfills its function.

In consequence, it is difficult not to be struck by the agreement between the text of the Qur'an and the scientific knowledge we possess today of these phenomena.

3. The Implantation of the Egg In the Female Genital Organs.

Once the egg has been fertilized in the Fallopian tube it descends to lodge inside the uterus; this is called the 'implantation of the egg'. The Qur'an names the lodging of the fertilized egg womb:

-sura 22, verse 5:

"We cause whom We[78] will to rest in the womb for an appointed term."

The implantation of the egg in the uterus (womb) is the result of the development of villousities, veritable elongations of the egg, which, like roots in the soil, draw nourishment from the thickness of the uterus necessary to the egg's growth. These formations make the egg literally cling to the uterus. This is a discovery of modern times.

The act of clinging is described five different times in the Qur'an. Firstly in verses 1 and 2 of sura 96:

"Read, in the name of thy Lord Who fashioned,
Who fashioned man from something which clings."

'Something which clings' is the translation of the word '*alaq*'. It is the original meaning of the word. A meaning derived from it, 'blood clot', often figures in translation; it is a mistake against which one should guard: man has never passed through the stage of being a 'blood clot'. The same is true for another translation of this term, 'adhesion' which is equally inappropriate. The original sense of 'something which clings' corresponds exactly to today's firmly established reality.

This concept is recalled in four other verses which describe successive transformations from the small quantity of sperm through to the end:

--sura 22, verse 5:

"We have fashioned you from . . . something which clings."

--sura 23, verse 14:

"We have fashioned the small quantity (of sperm) into something which clings."

--sura 40, verse 67:

"(God) fashioned you from a small quantity (of sperm), from something which clings."

-sura 75, verse 37-38:

"Was (man) not a small quantity of sperm which has been poured out? After that he was something which clings; then God fashioned him in due proportion."

The organ which harbours the pregnancy is qualified in the Qur'an by a word which, as we have seen, is still used in Arabic to signify the uterus. In some suras, it is called a 'lodging firmly established' (sura 23, verse 13, quoted above and sura 77, verse 21)[79].

4. Evolution of the Embryo inside the Uterus.

The Qur'anic description of certain stages in the development of the embryo corresponds exactly to what we today know about it, and the Qur'an does not contain a single statement that is open to criticism from modern science.

After 'the thing which clings' (an expression which is well-founded, as we have seen) the Qur'an informs us that the embryo passes through the stage of 'chewed flesh', then osseous tissue appears and is clad in flesh (defined by a different word from the preceding which signifies 'intact flesh').

--sura 23, verse 14:

"We fashioned the thing which clings into a chewed lump of flesh and We fashioned the chewed flesh into bones and We clothed the bones with intact flesh."

'Chewed flesh' is the translation of the word *mudga*; 'intact flesh' is *lahm*. This distinction needs to be stressed. The embryo is initially a small mass. At a certain stage in its development, it looks to the naked eye like chewed flesh. The bone structure develops inside this mass in what is called the mesenchyma. The bones that are formed are covered in muscle; the word *lahm* applies to them.

Another verse which requires extremely delicate interpretation is the following:

--sura 39, verse 6:

"(God) fashions you inside the bodies of your mothers, formation after formation, in three (veils of) darkness." (*zulumat*)

Modern interpreters of the Qur'an see in this verse the three anatomical layers that protect the infant during gestation: the abdominal wall, the uterus itself, and the surroundings of the foetus (placenta, embryonic membranes, amniotic fluid).

I am obliged to quote this verse for the sake of completeness; the interpretation given here does not seem to me to be disputable from an anatomical point of view but is this what the text of the Qur'an really means?

It is known how certain parts appear to be completely out of proportion during embryonic development with what is later to become the individual, while others remain in proportion.

This is surely the meaning of the word *mukallaq* which signifies 'shaped in proportion' as used in verse 5, sura 22 to describe this phenomenon.

"We fashioned . . . into something which clings . . . into a lump of flesh in proportion and out of proportion."

The Qur'an also describes the appearance of the senses and the viscerae:

--sura 32, verse 9:

"(God) appointed for you the sense of hearing, sight and the viscerae."

It refers to the formation of the sexual organs:

--sura 53, verses 45-46:

"(God) fashioned the two of a pair, the male and the female, from a small quantity (of sperm) when it is poured out."

The formation of the sexual organs is described in two sura of the Qur'an:

--sura 35, verse 11:

"God created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then He made you pairs (the male and female)."

--sura 75, verse 39:

"And, (God) made of him a pair, the male and female."

As has already been noted, all statements in the Qur'an must be compared with today's firmly established concepts: the agreement between them is very clear. It is however very important to compare them with the general beliefs on this subject that were held at the time of the Qur'anic Revelation in order to realize just how far people were in those days from having views on these problems similar to those expressed here in the Qur'an. There can be no doubt that they would have been unable to interpret the Revelation in the way we can today because we are helped by the data modern knowledge affords us. It was, in fact, only during the Nineteenth century that people had a slightly clearer view of this question.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the most diversified doctrines originated in unfounded myths and speculations: they persisted for several centuries after this period. The most fundamental stage in the history of embryology was Harvey's statement (1651) that "all life initially comes from an egg". At this time however, when nascent science had nevertheless benefited greatly (for the subject in hand) from the invention of the microscope, people were still talking about the respective roles of the egg and the spermatozoon. Buffon, the great naturalist, was one of those in favor of the egg theory, but Bonnet supported the theory of the seeds being 'packed together'. the ovaries of Eve, the mother of the human race, were supposed to have contained the seeds of all human beings, packed together one inside the other. This hypothesis came into favor in the Eighteenth century.

More than a thousand years before our time, at a period when whimsical doctrines still prevailed, men had a knowledge of the Qur'an. The statements it contains express in simple terms truths of primordial importance which man has taken centuries to discover.

THE QUR'AN AND SEX EDUCATION.

Our epoch believes that it has made manifold discoveries in all possible fields. It is thought that great innovations have been made in the field of sex education, and the knowledge of the facts of life which has been opened up to young people is regarded as an achievement of the modern world. Previous centuries were noted for their deliberate obscurity on this point and many people say that religion-without stating which religion-is the cause of it.

The information set out above is proof however that fourteen centuries ago theoretical questions (as it were) on human reproduction were brought to man's attention. This was done as far as was possible, taking into account the fact that the anatomical and physiological data needed for further explanations were lacking. One should also remember that, to be understood, it was necessary to use simple language suited to the level of comprehension of those who listened to the Preaching.

Practical considerations have not been silently ignored. There are many details in the Qur'an on the practical side of life in general, and the way man should behave in the many situations of his existence. His sex life is no exception.

Two verses in the Qur'an deal with sexual relations themselves. They are described in terms which unite the need for precision with that of decency. When translations and explanatory commentaries are consulted however, one is struck by the divergences between them. I have pondered for a long time on the translation of such verses, and am indebted to Doctor A. K. Giraud, Former Professor at the Faculty of Medicine, Beirut, for the following:

--sura 86, verse 6 and 7:

"(Man) was fashioned from a liquid poured out. It issued (as a result) of the conjunction of the sexual area of the man and the sexual area of the woman." The sexual area of the man is indicated in the text of the Qur'an by the word *sulb* (singular). The sexual areas of the woman are designated in the Qur'an by the word *tara'ib* (plural).

This is the translation which appears to be most satisfactory. It is different from the one that is often given by English and French translators, i.e. "(Man) has been created by a liquid poured out which issues from between the vertebral column and the bones of the breast." This would seem more to be an interpretation than a translation. It is hardly comprehensible.

The behavior of a man in his intimate relationships with his wife is stated explicitly.

There is the order concerning the menstruation period contained in verses 222 and 223, sura 2; God gives the following command to the Prophet:

--sura 2, verses 222 and 223:

"They (the Believers) question thee concerning menstruation. Say: This is an evil. Keep away from women during menstruation and do not approach them until they are clean. When they have purified themselves, go to them, as God ordered it to you.

"Verily, God loves the repentants and loves those who purified themselves.

"Your wives are a tilth. Go to your tilth as you will. Do (some good act) for your souls beforehand."

The beginning of this passage is very clear in meaning: it formally forbids a man to have sexual contact with a woman who has her period. The second part describes the process of tilling which the sower performs before sowing the seed which is to germinate and produce a new plant. Through this image therefore, stress is indirectly laid on the importance of bearing in mind the final purpose of sexual contact, i.e. reproduction. The translation of the final phrase is by R. Blachère: it contains an order which seems to refer to the preliminaries before sexual contact.

The orders given here are of a very general kind. The problem of contraception has been raised with regard to these verses: neither here, nor anywhere else, is reference made to this subject. Nor is provoked abortion referred to. The numerous passages quoted above on the successive transformations of the embryo make it quite clear, however, that man is considered to be constituted as of the stage described by the existence of 'something which clings'. This being so, the absolute respect of the individual human being, which is referred to so often in the Qur'an, brings with it a total condemnation of provoked abortion. This attitude is today shared by all monotheistic religions.

Sexual relations are permitted at night during the Fast in the month of Ramadan. The verse concerning Ramadan is as follows:

--sura 2, verse 187:

"Permitted to you, on the night of the fast, is to break chastity with your wives. They are a garment for you and you are a garment for them. So hold intercourse with them and seek what God has ordained for you."

In contrast to this, no exception to the rule is made for pilgrims in Makka during the celebration days of the Pilgrimage.

--sura 2, verse 197:

"For whom undertakes (the duty of) the Pilgrimage in its time, no wooing and no license."

This prohibition is formal, as is the fact that other activities are forbidden, e.g. hunting, fighting, etc. Menstruation is again mentioned in the Qur'an in connection with divorce. The Book contains the following verse:

--sura 65, verse 4:

"For your wives who despair of menstruation, if you doubt about them, their period of waiting will be three months. For those who never have their monthly periods and those who are pregnant their period will be until they lay down their burden."

The waiting period referred to here is the time between the announcement of the divorce and the time it comes into effect. Those women of whom it is said 'they despair of menstruation' have reached the menopause. A precautionary period of three months is envisaged for them. Once this period is completed, divorced women who have reached the menopause may remarry.

For those who have not yet menstruated, the pregnancy period has to be awaited. For pregnant women, divorce only comes into effect once the child is born.

All these laws are in perfect agreement with physiological data. One can, furthermore, find in the Qur'an the same judicious legal provision in the texts dealing with widowhood.

Thus, the theoretical statements dealing with reproduction, and the practical instructions on the sex life of couples, do not contradict and cannot be placed in opposition to the data we have from modern knowledge, nor with anything that can be logically derived from it.

Qur'anic and Biblical Narrations

General Outlines

A large number of subjects dealt with in the Bible are also found in the Qur'an. Firstly, there are narrations referring to the Prophets; Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Elias, Jonah, Job and Moses; the Kings of Israel; Saul, David, Solomon-to name just some of the main narrations they share in common. There then follow more specific accounts of great events in the course of which the supernatural has intervened, e.g. the Creation of the Earth and Heavens, the Creation of Man, the Flood, the Exodus. Finally, there is all that has to do with Jesus and His mother Mary as far as it concerns the New Testament.

What reflections do the subjects dealt with in the two Scriptures provoke when viewed in the light of our modern knowledge of them from extra-Scriptural sources?

Parallel: Qur'an/Gospel and Modern Knowledge.

With regard to the parallel of Qur'an/Gospels, one must first note that none of the subjects referred to in the Gospels, which were criticized from a scientific point of view (see Part Two of this book), is quoted in the Qur'an.

Jesus is referred to many times in the Qur'an, e.g. Mary's annunciation of the nativity to his father, the annunciation of the miraculous nativity to Mary, Jesus's stature as a Prophet of the highest order, His role as a Messiah, the Revelation He directs to Man which confirms and modifies the Torah, His preachings, His disciples and apostles, the miracles, His Ascension to God, His role in the Last Judgment, etc.

Suras 3 and 19 of the Qur'an (the second of which bears Mary's name) devote long passages to Jesus's family. They describe His mother Mary's nativity, her youth and the annunciation of her miraculous motherhood. Jesus is always called 'Son of Mary'. His ancestry is exclusively given with regard to His mother's side, which is quite logical since Jesus had no biological father. Here the Qur'an differs from Matthew's and Luke's Gospels: as we have already seen, they give the paternal genealogies of Jesus which are, moreover, different from each other.

In the Qur'an, Jesus is placed according to His maternal genealogy in the line of Noah, Abraham, and Mary's father (Imran in the Qur'an):

--sura 3, verses 33 and 34:

"God chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Imran above all His creatures, as descendants one from another."

So Jesus is descended from Noah and Abraham on His mother Mary's side, and from her father Imran. The errors made in the naming of the 'ancestors of Jesus' found in the Gospels are not present in the Qur'an, nor are the impossibilities in the genealogies contained in the Old Testament of Abraham's ancestry, both of which were examined in the first and second parts of this book.

Once again, this fact must be noted if one is to be objective, and yet again its great importance appears very clearly in the face of the unfounded statements which are made claiming that Muhammad, the author of the Qur'an, largely copied the Bible. One wonders in that case who or what reason compelled him to avoid copying the passages the Bible contains on Jesus's ancestry, and to insert at this point in the Qur'an the corrections that put his text above any criticism from modern knowledge. The Gospels and Old Testament texts are quite the opposite; from this point of view they are totally unacceptable.

Parallel: Qur'an/ Old Testament and Modern Knowledge.

In the case of the Old Testament, certain aspects of this parallel have already been dealt with. The Creation of the world, for example, was the subject of a critical study made in the Old Testament section of this book. The same subject was examined with regard to the Qur'anic Revelation. Comparisons were made and there is no need to cover this ground again.

It seems that historical knowledge is too vague and archaeological data too scarce for parallels to be established in the light of modern knowledge on problems concerning the Kings of Israel, who form the subject of narrations in both the Qur'an and the Bible.

Whether or not one can tackle the problem of the Prophets in the light of modern data depends on the extent to which the events described have left traces which may or may not have come down to us.

There are however two subjects dealt with in both the Qur'an and the Bible which should command our attention and which need to be examined in the light of modern knowledge. They are as follows:

--the Flood,
--the Exodus.

--The first because it has not left traces in the history of civilization which support the Biblical narration, whereas modern data do not permit us to criticize the narration contained in the Qur'an.

--The second because the Biblical and Qur'anic narrations evidently complement each other in their broad outlines, and modern data seem to provide both of them with remarkable historical support.

The Flood

*The Biblical Narration of the Flood and the Criticism
Leveled at It- A Reminder.*

The examination of the Old Testament description of the Flood in the first part of this book led to the following observations:

There is not just one description of the Flood, but two, written at different times;

--the Yahvist version which dates from the Ninth century B.C.

--the Sacerdotal version dating from the Sixth century B.C., so called because it was the work of priests of the time.

These two narrations are not juxtaposed, but interwoven so that part of one is fitted in-between parts of the other, i.e. paragraphs from one source alternate with passage from the other.

The commentary to the translation of Genesis by Father de Vaux, a professor at the Biblical School of Jerusalem, shows very clearly how the paragraphs are distributed between the two sources. The narration begins and ends with a Yahvist passage. There are ten Yahvist paragraphs altogether and between each one a Sacerdotal passage has been inserted (there are a total of nine Sacerdotal paragraphs). This mosaic of texts is only coherent when read from a point of view which takes the succession of episodes into account, since there are blatant contradictions between the two sources. Father de Vaux describes them as "two accounts of the Flood, in which the cataclysm is caused by different agents and lasts different lengths of time, and where Noah receives into the Ark a different number of animals."

When seen in the light of modern knowledge, the Biblical description of the Flood as a whole is unacceptable for the following reasons:

- a) The Old Testament ascribes to it the character of a universal cataclysm.
- b) Whereas the paragraphs from the Yahvist text do not date the Flood, the Sacerdotal text situates it at a point in time where a cataclysm of this kind could not have occurred.

The following are arguments supporting this opinion:

The Sacerdotal narration states quite precisely that the Flood took place when Noah was 600 years old. According to the genealogies in chapter 5 of Genesis (also taken from the Sacerdotal text and quoted in the first part of this book), we know that Noah is said to have been born 1,056 years after Adam. Consequently, the Flood would have taken place 1,655 years after the creation of Adam. The genealogical table of Abraham moreover, taken from the same text and given in Genesis (11, 10-32), allows us to estimate that Abraham was born 292 years after the Flood. As we know that (according to the Bible) Abraham was alive in roughly 1850 B.C., the Flood would therefore be situated in the Twenty-first or Twenty-second century B.C. This calculation is in strict keeping with the information in old editions of the Bible which figures prominently at the head of the Biblical text.

This was at a time when the lack of human knowledge on the subject was such that the chronological data contained in the Bible were accepted without question by its readers-for want of any arguments to the contrary.[80]

How is it possible to conceive today of a universal cataclysm in the Twenty-first or Twenty-second century B.C. which destroyed life on all the earth's surface (except for the people and animals in the Ark)? By this time, civilizations had flourished in several parts of the globe, and their vestiges have now come down to posterity. In Egypt at this time, for example, the Intermediate Period followed the end of the Old Kingdom and preceded the beginning of the Middle Kingdom. In view of our knowledge of the history of this period, it would be absurd to maintain that the Flood had destroyed all civilization at this time.

Thus It may be affirmed from a historical point of view that the narration of the Flood as it is presented in the Bible is in evident contradiction with modern knowledge. The formal proof of man's manipulation of the Scriptures is the existence of the two texts.

The Narration of the Flood Contained in the Qur'an.

The Qur'an gives a general version which is different from that contained in the Bible and does not give rise to any criticisms from a historical point of view.

It does not provide a continuous narration of the Flood. Numerous suras talk of the punishment inflicted upon Noah's people. The most complete account of this is in sura 11, verses 25 to 49. Sura 71, which bears Noah's name, describes above all Noah's preachings, as do verses 105 to 115, sura 26. Before going into the actual course taken by events, we must consider the Flood as described in the Qur'an by relating it to the general context of the punishment God inflicted on communities guilty of gravely infringing His Commandments.

Whereas the Bible describes a universal Flood intended to punish ungodly humanity as a whole, the Qur'an, in contrast, mentions several punishments inflicted on certain specifically defined communities.

This may be seen in verses 35 to 39, sura 25:

"We gave Moses the Scripture and appointed his brother Aaron with him as vizier. We said: Go to the people who have denied Our signs. We destroyed them completely. When the people of Noah denied the Messengers, We drowned them and We made of them a sign for mankind. (We destroyed the tribes) of Âd and Tamud, the companions of Rass and many generations between them. We warned each of them by examples and We annihilated them completely."

Sura 7, verses 59 to 93 contains a reminder of the punishments brought upon Noah's people, the Âd, the Tamud, Lot (Sodom) and Madian respectively.

Thus the Qur'an presents the cataclysm of the Flood as a punishment specifically intended for Noah's people: this is the first basic difference between the two narrations.

The second fundamental difference is that the Qur'an, in contrast to the Bible, does not date the Flood in time and gives no indication as to the duration of the cataclysm itself.

The causes of the flooding are roughly the same in both narrations. The Sacerdotal description in the Bible (Genesis 7, 11) cites two causes which occurred simultaneously. "On that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened." The Qur'an records the following in verses 11 and 12, sura 54:

"We opened the Gates of Heaven with pouring water. And We caused the ground to gush forth springs, so the waters met according to the decree which has been ordained."

The Qur'an is very precise about the contents of the Ark. The order God gave to Noah was faithfully executed and it was to do the following:

--sura 11, verse 40:

"(In the Ark) load a pair of every kind, thy family, save this one against whom the word has already gone forth, and those who believe. But only a few had believed with him."

The person excluded from the family is an outcast son of Noah. We learn (sura 11, verses 45 and 46) how Noah's supplications on this person's behalf to God were unable to make Him alter His decision. Apart from Noah's family (minus the outcast son), the Qur'an refers to the few other passengers on board the Ark who had believed in God.

The Bible does not mention the latter among the occupants of the Ark. In fact, it provides us with three different versions of the Ark's contents:

--according to the Yahvist version, a distinction is made between 'pure' animals and birds, and 'impure' animals (seven[81] pairs, i.e. seven males and seven females, of each 'pure' species, was taken into the Ark and only one pair of each 'impure' species).

-according to a modified Yahvist verse (Genesis 7, 8) there was only one pair of each species, whether 'pure' or 'impure'. -according to the Sacerdotal version, there was Noah, his family (with no exceptions) and a pair taken from each species.

The narration in the Qur'an of the flooding itself is contained in sura 11, verses 25 to 49 and in sura 23, verses 23 to 30. The Biblical narrative does not present any important differences.

In the Bible, the place where the Ark comes to rest is in the Ararat Mountains (Genesis 8, 4) and for the Qur'an it is the *Judi* (sura 11, verse 44.) This mountain is said to be the highest of the Ararat range in Armenia, but nothing proves that the names were not changed by man to tally with the two narratives. This is confirmed by R. Blachère: according to him there is a peak in Arabia named Judi. The agreement of names may well be artificial.

In conclusion, it is possible to state categorically what major differences exist here between the Biblical and Qur'anic narrations. Some of them escape critical examination because objective data are lacking. When, however, it is possible to check the statements in the Scriptures in the light of the established data, the incompatibility between the Biblical narration-i.e. the information given on its place in time and geographical extent-and the discoveries that have contributed to modern knowledge is all too clear. In contrast to this, the narration contained in the Qur'an is free from anything which might give rise to objective criticism. One might ask if it is possible that, between the time of the Biblical narration and the one contained in the Qur'an, man could have acquired knowledge that shed light on this event. The answer is no, because from the time of the Old Testament to the Qur'an, the only document man possessed on this ancient story was the Bible itself. If human factors are unable to account for the changes in the narrations which affected their meaning with regard to modern knowledge, another explanation has to be accepted, i.e. a Revelation which came after the one contained in the Bible.

The Exodus

With the Exodus from Egypt of Moses and his followers, (the first stage of their move to Canaan), we come to an event of great importance. It is an established historical event which appears in a known context, in spite of occasional allegations one finds which tend to attribute to it a largely legendary character.

In the Old Testament, the Exodus forms the second book of the Pentateuch or Torah, along with a narration of the journey through the wilderness and the alliance (covenant) concluded with God on Mount Sinai. It is natural for the Qur'an to devote a great deal of space to it too: an account of the dealings Moses and his brother Aaron had with the Pharaoh and of the exit from Egypt is found in more than ten suras containing long descriptions, e.g. suras, 7, 10, 20 and 26, along with more abridged versions and even simple reminders. The name of Pharaoh, the main character on the Egyptian side, is repeated (to the best of my knowledge) seventy-four times in the Qur'an in 27 suras.

A study of both the Qur'anic and Biblical narrations is especially interesting here because, in contrast to what has been noted in the case of the Flood (for example), in the main, the two narrations have many points in common. There are certainly divergences, but the Biblical narration has considerable historical value, as we shall see. This is because it helps to identify the Pharaoh, or rather the two pharaohs in question. This hypothesis, which starts with the Bible, is complemented by the information contained in the Qur'an. Modern data are added to these two Scriptural sources and it is thus possible, through a confrontation between the Bible, the Qur'an and today's knowledge, to situate this episode from the Holy Scriptures in a historical context.

THE EXODUS ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

The Biblical narration begins with a reminder of the Jews' entry into Egypt with Jacob, who joined Joseph there. Later on, according to Exodus 1, 8:

"Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph."

The period of oppression followed; the Pharaoh ordered the Jews to build the cities of Pithom and Ramesses (to use the names given to them in the Bible) (Exodus I, 11). To avoid a population explosion among the Hebrews, Pharaoh ordered each new-born son to be thrown into the river. Moses was nevertheless preserved by his mother for the first three months of his life before she finally decided to put him in a rush basket on the river's edge. The Pharaoh's daughter discovered him, rescued him and gave him to a nurse, none other than his own mother. This was because Moses's sister had watched to see who would find the baby, had pretended not to recognize him and then recommended to the Princess a nurse who was really the child's mother. He was treated as one of the Pharaoh's sons and given the name 'Moses'.

As a young man, Moses left for a country called Midian where he married and lived for a long time. We read an important detail in Exodus 2, 23:

"In the course of those many days the king of Egypt died."

God ordered Moses to go and find the Pharaoh and lead his brothers out of Egypt (the description of this order is given in the episode of the Burning Bush). Aaron, Moses's brother, helped him in this task. This is why Moses, once he had returned to Egypt, went with his brother to visit the Pharaoh who was the successor of the king under whose reign he had long ago been born.

The Pharaoh refused to allow the Jews in Moses's group to leave Egypt. God revealed Himself to Moses once again and ordered him to repeat his request to Pharaoh. According to the Bible, Moses was eighty years old at this time. Through magic, Moses showed the Pharaoh that he had supernatural powers. This was not enough however. God sent the famous plagues down upon Egypt. The rivers were changed into blood, there were invasions of frogs, gnats and swarms of flies, the cattle died, boils appeared on men and animals, there was hail and plagues of locusts, darkness and the death of the first-born. Nevertheless, the Pharaoh still did not allow the Hebrews to leave.

They therefore broke out of the city of Rameses, 600,000 of them[82] "besides women and children" (Exodus 12, 37). At this point Pharaoh "made ready his chariot and took his army . With him, and took six hundred picked charioteers and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them . . . Pharaoh, king of Egypt, pursued the people of Israel as they went forth defiantly." (Exodus 14, 6 and 8). The Egyptians caught up with Moses's party beside the sea. Moses raised his staff, the sea parted before him and his followers walked across it without wetting their feet. "The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen." (Exodus 14, 23) "The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left." (Exodus 14, 28-29).

The text of Exodus is quite clear: Pharaoh was at the head of the pursuers. He perished because the text of Exodus notes that "not so much as one of them remained." The Bible repeats this detail moreover in the Psalms: Psalm 106, verse 11 and Psalm 136 verses 13 and 15 which are an act of thanks to God "Who divided the sea of Rushes[83] in sunder . . . and made Israel pass through the midst of it . . . but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the sea of Rushes." There can be no doubt therefore, that according to the Bible, the Pharaoh of the Exodus perished in the sea. The Bible does not record what became of his body.

THE EXODUS ACCORDING TO THE QUR'AN

In its broad outlines, the narration of the Exodus contained in the Qur'an is similar to that of the Bible. It has to be reconstituted, however, because it is made up of passages dispersed throughout the Book.

The Qur'an does not provide a name which enables us to identify who the reigning Pharaoh was at the time of Exodus, any more than the Bible does. All that is known is that one of his counsellors was called *Haman*. He is referred to six times in the Qur'an (sura 28, verses 6, 8 and 38, sura 29, verse 39 and sura 40, verses 24 and 36).

The Pharaoh is the Jews' oppressor:

--sura 14, verse 6:

"When Moses said to his people: Remember the favor of God to you when He delivered you from Pharaoh's folk who imposed upon you a dreadful torment, slaughtered your sons and spared your women."

The oppression is recalled in the same terms in verse 141, sura 7. The Qur'an does not however mention the names of the cities built by the Jews in subjection, as does the Bible.

The episode where Moses is left by the riverside is recorded in sura 20 verses 39-40 and sura 28, verses 7 to 13. In the version contained in the Qur'an, Moses is taken in by Pharaoh's family. We find this in verses 8 and 9, sura 28:

"The family of Pharaoh took him up. (It was intended) that (Moses) should be to them an adversary and a cause of sorrow. Pharaoh, Haman and their hosts were sinners. Pharaoh's wife said: (He will be) a joy to the eye for me and you. Don't kill him. He may be of use to us or we may take him as a son. They did not sense (what was to come)."

Muslim tradition has it that it was Pharaoh's wife Asiya who took care of Moses. In the Qur'an, it was not the Pharaoh's wife who found him, but members of his household.

Moses's youth, his stay in Midian and marriage are described in sura 28, verses 13 to 28.

In particular, the episode of the Burning Bush is found in the first part of sura 20, and in sura 28, verses 30 to 35.

The Qur'an does not describe the ten plagues sent down upon Egypt as a divine chastisement (unlike the long description in the Bible), but simply mentions five plagues very briefly (sura 7, verse 133): flooding, locusts, lice, frogs, and blood.

The flight from Egypt is described in the Qur'an, but without any of the geographical data given in the Bible, nor the incredible numbers of people mentioned in the latter. It is difficult to imagine how 600,000 men plus their families could have stayed in the desert for a long time, as the Bible would have us believe.

This is how the death of Pharaoh pursuing the Hebrews is described:

--sura 20, verse 78:

"Pharaoh pursued them with his hosts and the sea covered them."

The Jews escaped. Pharaoh perished, but his body was found: a very important detail not mentioned in the Biblical narration.

--sura 10, verses 90 to 92. God is speaking:

"We took the Children of Israel across the sea. Pharaoh with his hosts pursued them in rebellion and hostility till, when the fact of his drowning overtook him, he said: I believe there is no God except the God in whom the Children of Israel believe. I am of those who submit themselves to Him."

"God said: 'What? Now !. Thou has rebelled and caused depravity. This day We save thee in thy body so that thou mayest be a sign for those who come after thee.' But verily, many among mankind are heedless of Our signs."

This passage requires two points to be explained:

a) The spirit of rebellion and hostility referred to is to be understood in terms of Moses's attempt to persuade the Pharaoh.

b) The rescue of the Pharaoh refers to his corpse because it is stated quite clearly in verse 98, sura 11, that Pharaoh and his followers have been condemned to damnation:

--sura 11, verse 98 "Pharaoh will go before his people on the Day of Resurrection and will lead them to the fire." For those facts which can be checked with historical, geographical and archaeological data therefore, it should be noted that the Qur'anic and Biblical narrations differ on the following points:

--the absence in the Qur'an of place names, both of the cities built by the Hebrews in Moses's group, and on the route taken by the Exodus.

--the absence of any reference to the death of a Pharaoh during Moses's stay in Midian.

--the absence in the Qur'an of details concerning Moses's age when he addressed his request to the Pharaoh.

--the absence in the Qur'an of the numbering of Moses's followers. These figures are openly exaggerated in the Bible to incredible proportions (said to have been 600,000 men plus their families forming a community of more than two million inhabitants.)

--the absence of any mention in the Bible of the rescue of the Pharaoh's body after his death.

For our present purposes, the points to be noted because they are shared by both narrations are as follows:

--the confirmation contained in the Qur'an of Pharaoh's oppression of the Jews in Moses's group.

--the absence from both narrations of any mention of the King of Egypt's name.

--the confirmation contained in the Qur'an of the Pharaoh's death during the Exodus.

CONFRONTATION BETWEEN SCRIPTURAL DATA AND MODERN KNOWLEDGE

The narrations contained in the Bible and the Qur'an on the time spent by the sons of Israel in Egypt, and the way they left, give rise to data which may constitute matter for a confrontation with modern knowledge. In fact, the balance is very uneven because some data pose many problems while others hardly provide subject for discussion.

1. Examination of Certain Details Contained in the Narrations The Hebrews in Egypt

It is, apparently, quite possible to say (and without running much risk of being wrong) that the Hebrews remained in Egypt for 400 or 430 years, according to the Bible (Genesis 15, 13 and Exodus 12, 40). In spite of this discrepancy between Genesis and Exodus, which is of minor importance, the period may be said to have begun long after Abraham, when Joseph, son of Jacob, moved with his brothers to Egypt. With the exception of the Bible, which gives the data just quoted, and the Qur'an which refers to the move to Egypt, but does not

give any indication as to the dates involved, we do not possess any other document which is able to illuminate us on this point.

Present-day commentators, ranging from P. Montet to Daniel Rops, think that, in all probability, the arrival of Joseph and his brothers coincided with the movement of the Hyksos towards Egypt in the Seventeenth century B.C. and that a Hyksos sovereign probably received them hospitably at Avaris in the Nile Delta.

There can be no doubt that this guess is in obvious contradiction to what is contained in the Bible (Kings I, 6, 1) which puts the Exodus from Egypt at 480 years before the construction of Solomon's Temple (circa 971 B.C.). This estimation would therefore put the Exodus at roughly 1450 B.C. and would consequently situate the entry into Egypt at circa 1880-1850 B.C. This is precisely the time, however, that Abraham is supposed to have lived, and other data contained in the Bible tell us that there were 250 years separating him from Joseph. This passage from Kings I in the Bible is therefore unacceptable from a chronological point of view.[84] We shall see how the theory put forward here has only this objection, taken from Kings I, to be levelled against it. The very obvious inaccuracy of these chronological data effectively deprives this objection of any value.

Aside from the Holy Scriptures, the traces left by the Hebrews of their stay in Egypt are very faint. There are however several hieroglyphic documents which refer to the existence in Egypt of a category of workers called the '*Apiru*, *Hapiru* or *Habiru*, who have been identified (rightly or wrongly) with the Hebrews. In this category were construction workers, agricultural labourers, harvesters, etc. But where did they come from? It is very difficult to find an answer to this. Father de Vaux has written the following about them: "They are not members of the local population, they do not identify themselves with a class in society, they do not all share the same occupation or status."

Under Tuthmosis III, they are referred to in a papyrus as 'workers in the stables'. It is known how Amenophis II, in the Fifteenth century B.C., brought in 3,600 of these people as prisoners from Canaan, because, as Father de Vaux notes, they constituted a considerable percentage of the Syrio-Palestinian population. Under Sethos I, in circa 1300 B.C., the '*Apiru* created considerable disturbances in the Beth-Shean region of Canaan, and under Ramesses II some of them were employed in the quarries or for transporting piles used in the works of the Pharaoh (e.g. the Great Pylon of Ramesses Miamon). We know from the Bible that the Hebrews, under Ramesses II, were to build the northern capital, the City of Ramesses. In Egyptian writings the '*Apiru* are mentioned once again in the Twelfth century B.C. and for the last time under Ramesses III.

The '*Apiru* are not just mentioned in Egypt however, so did the term therefore apply solely to the Hebrews? It is perhaps wise to recall that the word could initially have been used to signify 'forced labourers', without regard to their origins, and that it subsequently became an adjective indicating a person's profession. We might perhaps draw an analogy with the word 'suisse' (Swiss) which has several different meanings in French. It can mean an inhabitant of Switzerland, a mercenary soldier of the old French monarchy who was of Swiss extraction, a Vatican guard, or an employee of a Christian church . . . However, this may be, under Ramesses II, the Hebrews (according to the Bible) or the '*Apiru* (according to the hieroglyphic texts) took part in the great works ordered by the Pharaoh, which were indeed 'forced labour'. There can be no doubt that Ramesses II was the Jews' oppressor: the cities of Ramesses and Pithom, mentioned in Exodus, are situated at the eastern part of the Nile Delta. Today's Tanis and Qantir, which are roughly 15 miles apart, are in the same region as these two cities. The northern capital constructed by Ramesses II was situated there. Ramesses II is the Pharaoh of the oppression.

Moses was to be born in this environment. The circumstances pertaining to his rescue from the waters of the river have already been outlined above. He has an Egyptian name: P. Montet has clearly shown in his book *Egypt and the Bible* (L'Egypte et la Bible)[85] that the names Mesw or Mesy are on the list of personal names in the dictionary of the hieroglyphic language by Ranke. *Musa* is the transliteration used in the Qur'an.

The Plagues of Egypt

Under this title the Bible refers to ten punishments inflicted by God, and provides many details concerning each of these 'plagues'. Many have supernatural dimensions or characteristics. The Qur'an only lists five plagues, which, for the most part, are merely an exaggeration of natural phenomena: flooding, locusts, lice, frogs and blood.

The rapid multiplication of locusts and frogs is described in the Bible. It speaks of river water changed to blood which floods all the land (sic); the Qur'an refers to blood, but without giving any complementary details. It is possible to invent all kinds of hypotheses on the subject of this reference to blood.

The other plagues described in the Bible (gnats, swarms of flies, boils, hail, darkness, death of the first-born and of cattle) have various origins, as was the case of the Flood, and are constituted by the juxtaposition of passages from many different sources.

The Route Taken by the Exodus

No indication of this is given in the Qur'an, whereas the Bible refers to it in great detail. Father de Vaux and P. Montet have both reopened studies into it. The starting-point was probably the Tanis-Qantir region, but no traces have been found of the rest of the route taken which could confirm the Biblical narration; nor is it possible to say at exactly what point the waters parted to allow the passage of Moses and his followers.

The Miraculous Parting of the Waters

Some commentators have imagined a tide-race, due perhaps to astronomic causes or seismic conditions connected to the distant eruption of a volcano. The Hebrews could have taken advantage of the receding sea, and the Egyptians, following in hot pursuit, could have been wiped out by the returning tide. All this is pure hypothesis however.

2. The Point Occupied by the Exodus in the History of the Pharaohs

It is possible to arrive at much more positive evidence in the case of the point the Exodus occupies in time.

For a very long time Merneptah, the successor to Ramesses II, was held to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Maspero, the famous Egyptologist of the beginning of this century did, after all, write in his *Visitor's Guide to the Cairo Museum* (Guide du visiteur du Musée du Caire), 1900, that Merneptah "was probably, according to the Alexandrian tradition, the Pharaoh of the Exodus who is said to have perished in the Red Sea." I have been unable to find the documents on which Maspero based this assertion, but the eminence of this commentator requires us to attach the greatest importance to what he claims.

Apart from P. Montet, there are very few Egyptologists or specialists in Biblical exegesis who have researched into the arguments for or against this hypothesis. In the last few decades however, there has been a spate of different hypotheses which seem to have as their sole purpose the justification of an agreement with one single detail in the Scriptural narrations, although the inventors of these hypotheses do not bother with the other aspects of the Scriptures. Thus it is possible for a hypothesis to suddenly appear which seems to agree with one aspect of a narration, although its inventor has not taken the trouble to compare it with all the other data contained in the Scriptures (and consequently not just with the Bible), plus all the data provided by history, archaeology, etc.

One of the strangest hypotheses yet to come to light is by J. de Miceli (1960) who claims to have pinpointed the date of the Exodus to within one day, i.e. the 9th of April, 1495 B.C. He relies for his information entirely on calculations made from calendars and claims that Tuthmosis II was reigning in Egypt at that time, and was therefore the Pharaoh of the Exodus. The confirmation of the hypothesis is supposed to reside in the fact that lesions of the skin are to be observed on the mummy of Tuthmosis II. This commentator informs us (without explaining why) that they are due to leprosy, and that one of the plagues of Egypt described in the Bible consisted in skin boils. This staggering construction takes no account of the other facts contained in the Biblical narration, especially the Bible's mention of the City of Ramesses which rules out any hypothesis dating the Exodus before a 'Ramesses' had reigned.

As to the skin lesions of Tuthmosis II, these do not swing the argument in favour of the theory which designates this King of Egypt as the Pharaoh of the Exodus. This is because his son, Tuthmosis III, and his grandson Amenophis II also show signs of skin tumors[86], so that some commentators have suggested the hypothesis of a disease which ran in the family. The Tuthmosis II theory is not therefore tenable.

The same is true for Daniel-Rops's theory in his book. *The People of the Bible* (Le Peuple de la Bible)[87]. He ascribes the role of the Pharaoh of the Exodus to Amenophis II. It does not seem to be any better-founded than the preceding hypothesis. Using the pretext that Amenophis II's father (Tuthmosis III) was very nationalistic, Daniel-Rops proclaims Amenophis II the persecutor of the Hebrews, while his step-mother, the famous Queen Hatshepsut, is cast in the role of the person who took Moses in (although we never discover why).

Father de Vaux's theory, that it was Ramesses II, rests on slightly more solid foundations. He expands on them in his book, *The Ancient History of Israel* (Histoire ancienne d'Israël)[88]. Even if his theory does not agree with the Biblical narration on every point, at least it has the advantage of putting forward one very important piece of evidence: the construction of the cities of Ramesses and Pithom built under Ramesses II referred to in the Biblical text. It is not possible therefore to maintain that the Exodus took place *before* the accession of Ramesses II. This is situated in the year 1301 B.C., according to Drioton and Vandier's chronology, and in 1290 B.C. according to Rowton's. The two other hypotheses outlined above are untenable because of the following imperative fact: Ramesses II is the Pharaoh of the oppression referred to in the Bible.

Father de Vaux considers the Exodus to have taken place during the first half or towards the middle of Ramesses II's reign.

Thus his dating of this event is imprecise: he suggests this period to allow Moses and his followers time, as it were, to settle in Canaan, and Ramesses II's successor, Pharaoh Mernaptah who is said to have pacified the frontiers after his father's death, to bring the Children of Israel into line, as depicted on a stele of the Fifth year of his reign.

Two arguments may be levelled at this theory:

a) The Bible shows (Exodus 2, 23) that the King of Egypt died during the period when Moses was in Midian. This King of Egypt is described in the Book of Exodus as the King who made the Hebrews build the cities of Ramesses and Pithom by forced labour. This King was Ramesses II. The Exodus could only have taken place under the latter's successor. Father de Vaux claims however to doubt the Biblical sources of verse 23, chapter 2 of Exodus.

b) What is more astounding is that Father de Vaux, as director of the Biblical School of Jerusalem, does not refer in his theory of the Exodus to two essential passages in the Bible, both of which bear witness to the fact that the King died during the pursuit of the fleeing Hebrews. This detail makes it impossible for the Exodus to have taken place at any other time than at the end of a reign.

It must be repeated that there can be little doubt that the Pharaoh lost his life as a result of it. Chapters 13 and 14 of Exodus are quite specific on this point: "So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him .

.. " (Exodus 14,6). (Pharaoh king of Egypt) "pursued the people of Israel as they went forth defiantly" (Exodus 14,8) . . . "The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained." (Exodus 14,28 and 29). In addition to these verses, Psalm 136 confirms Pharaoh's death and refers to Yahweh who "overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Sea of Rushes" (Psalms 136,15).

Thus, during Moses's lifetime, one Pharaoh died when Moses was in Midian and another during the Exodus. There were not one, but two Pharaohs at the time of Moses: one during the oppression and the other during the Exodus from Egypt. The theory of a single Pharaoh (Ramesses II) put forward by Father de Vaux is unsatisfactory because it does not account for everything. The following observations are further arguments against his theory.

3. Rameses II, Pharaoh of the Oppression Merneptah, Pharaoh of the Exodus

P. Montet has very discerningly resumed the original Alexandrian[89] tradition mentioned by Maspero. It is found much later in the Islamic tradition as well as in the classic Christian tradition.[90] This theory is set out in Montet's book *Egypt and the Bible* (L'Egypte et le Bible)[91] and is supported by additional arguments, based in particular on the narrative contained in the Qur'an, to which the famous archaeologist did not refer. Before examining them however, we shall first return to the Bible.

The Book of Exodus contains a reference to the word 'Ramesses' although the Pharaoh's name is not mentioned. In the Bible 'Ramesses' is the name of one of the cities built by the forced labour of the Hebrews. Today we know that these cities form part of the Tanis-Qantir region, in the eastern Nile Delta. In the area where Ramesses II built his northern capital, there were other constructions prior to his, but it was Ramesses II who made it into an important site, as the archeological excavations undertaken in the last few decades have amply shown. To build it, he used the labour of the enslaved Hebrews.

When one reads the word 'Ramesses' in the Bible today, one is not particularly struck by it: the word has become very common to us since Champollion discovered the key to hieroglyphics 150 years ago, by examining the characters that expressed this very word. We are therefore used to reading and pronouncing it today and know what it means. One has to remember however that the meaning of hieroglyphics had been lost in circa the Third century B.C. and that Ramesses' name had hardly been preserved anywhere except in the Bible and a few books written in Greek and Latin which had deformed it to a lesser or greater extent. It is for this reason that Tacitus in his *Annals* talks of 'Rhamsis'. The Bible had however preserved the name intact: it is referred to four times in the Pentateuch or Torah (Genesis 47,11; Exodus 1,11 and 12,37. Numbers 33,3 and 33,5).

The Hebrew word for 'Ramesses' is written in two ways in the Bible: 'Râ(e) mss' or 'Râeâmss'[92]. In the Greek version of the Bible, called the Septuagint, it is 'Râmessê'. In the Latin version (Vulgate) it is written 'Ramesses'. In the Clementine version of the Bible in French (1st edition, 1621) the word is the same, 'Ramesses'. The French edition was in circulation at the time of Champollion's work in this field. In his *Summary of the Hièrogllyphic System of the Ancient Egyptians* (Precis du systeme hièrogllyphique des anciens Egyptiens) (2nd edition, 1828, page 276), Champollion alludes to the Biblical spelling of the word.

Thus the Bible had miraculously preserved Ramesses's name in its Hebrew, Greek and Latin versions.[93]

The preceding data alone are enough to establish the following:

a) There can be no question of the Exodus before a 'Ramesses' had come to the throne in Egypt (11 Kings of Egypt had this name).

b) Moses was born during the reign of the Pharaoh who built the cities of Ramesses and Pithom, i.e. Ramesses II.

c) When Moses was in Midian, the reigning Pharaoh (i.e. Ramesses II) died. The continuation of Moses's story took place during the reign of Ramesses II's successor, Merneptah.

What is more, the Bible adds other highly important data which help to situate the Exodus in the history of the Pharaohs. It is the statement that Moses was eighty years old when, under God's orders, he tried to persuade Pharaoh to free his brothers: "Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh." (Exodus 7,7). Elsewhere however, the Bible tells us (Exodus 2,23) that the Pharaoh reigning at the time of the birth of Moses died when the latter was in Midian, although the Biblical narration continues without mentioning any change in the sovereign's name. These two passages in the Bible imply that the total number of years spanning the reigns of the two Pharaohs ruling at the time when Moses was living in Egypt must have been eighty years at least.

It is known that Ramesses II reigned for 67 years (1301-1235 B.C. according to Drioton and Vandier's chronology, 1290-1224 B.C. according to Rowton). For Merneptah, his successor, the Egyptologists are unable, however, to provide the exact dates of his reign. Nevertheless, it lasted for at least ten years because, as Father de Vaux points out, documents bear witness to the tenth year of his reign. Drioton and Vandier give two possibilities for Merneptah: either a ten-year reign, 1234-1224 B.C., or a twenty-year reign 1224-1204 B.C. Egyptologists have no precise indications whatsoever on how Merneptah's reign came to an end: all that can be said is that after his death, Egypt went through a period of serious internal upheavals lasting nearly 25 years.

Even though the chronological data on these reigns are not very precise, there was no other period during the New Kingdom concordant with the Biblical narration when two successive reigns (apart from Ramesses II-Merneptah) amounted to or surpassed eighty years. The Biblical data concerning Moses's age when he undertook the liberation of his brothers can only come from a time during the successive reigns of Ramesses II and Merneptah[94]. All the evidence points towards the fact that Moses was born at the beginning of Ramesses II's reign, was living in Midian when Ramesses II died after a sixty-seven year reign, and subsequently became the spokesman for the cause of the Hebrews living in Egypt to Merneptah, Ramesses II's son and successor. This episode may have happened in the second half of Merneptah's reign, assuming he reigned twenty years or nearly twenty years. Rowton believes the supposition to be quite feasible. Moses would then have led the Exodus at the end of Merneptah's reign. It could hardly have been otherwise because both the Bible and the Qur'an tell us that Pharaoh perished during the pursuit of the Hebrews leaving the country.

This plan agrees perfectly with the account contained in the Scriptures of Moses's infancy and of the way he was taken into the Pharaoh's family. It is a known fact that Ramesses II was very old when he died: it is said that he was ninety to a hundred years old. According to this theory, he would have been twentythree to thirty-three years old at the beginning of his reign which lasted sixty-seven years. He could have been married at that age and there is nothing to contradict the discovery of Moses by 'a member of Pharaoh's household' (according to the Qur'an), or the fact that Pharaoh's wife asked him if he would keep the newly-born child she had found on the bank of the Nile. The Bible claims that the child was found by Pharaoh's daughter. In view of Ramesses II's age at the beginning of his reign it would have been perfectly possible for him to have had a daughter old enough to discover the abandoned child. The Qur'anic and Biblical narrations do not contradict each other in any way on this point.

The theory given here is in absolute agreement with the Qur'an and is moreover at odds with only one single statement in the Bible which occurs (as we have seen) in Kings I 6,1 (N.B. this book is not included in the Torah). This passage is the subject of much debate and Father de Vaux rejects the historical data contained in this part of the Old Testament, which dates the Exodus in relation to the construction of Solomon's temple. The fact that it is subject to doubt makes it impossible to retain it as a conclusive argument against the theory outlined here.

The Problem of the Stele Dating from the Fifth Year of Merneptah's Reign

In the text of the famous stele dating from the fifth year of Merneptah's reign critics think they have found an objection to the theory set out here, in which the pursuit of the Jews constituted the last act of his reign.

The stele is of great interest because it represents the only known document in hieroglyphics which contains the word 'Israel'.^[95] The inscription which dates from the first part of Merneptah's reign was discovered in Thebes in the Pharaoh's Funeral Temple. It refers to a series of victories he won over Egypt's neighbouring states, in particular a victory mentioned at the end of the document over a "devastated Israel which has no more seed . . ." From this fact it has been held that the existence of the word 'Israel' implied that the Jews must already have settled in Canaan by the fifth year of Merneptah's reign, and that in consequence, the Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt had already taken place.

This objection does not seem tenable because it implies that there could have been no Jews living in Canaan all the while there were Jews in Egypt—a proposition it is impossible to accept. Father de Vaux however, in spite of the fact that he is a supporter of the theory which makes Ramesses II the Pharaoh of the Exodus, notes ^[96] the following about the settling of the Jews in Canaan: "In the South, the time when communities related to the Israelites settled in the Kadesh region is unclear and dates from before the Exodus." He therefore allows for the possibility that certain groups may have left Egypt at a time different from that of Moses and his followers. The *'Apiru or Habiru* who have sometimes been identified with the Israelites were already in Syria-Palestine long before Ramesses II and the Exodus: we have documentary evidence which proves that Amenophis II brought back 8,600 prisoners to work as forced labourers in Egypt. Others were to be found in Canaan under Sethos I where they caused unrest in the Beth-Shean region: P. Montet reminds us of this in his book *Egypt and the Bible* (*L'Egypte et la Bible*). It is quite plausible to suppose therefore that Merneptah was obliged to deal severely with these rebellious elements on his borders while inside them were those who were later to rally around Moses to flee the country. The existence of the stele dating from the fifth year of Merneptah's reign does not in any way detract from the present theory.

Moreover, *the fact that the word 'Israel' figures in the history of the Jewish people is totally unconnected with the notion that Moses and his followers settled in Canaan.* The origin of the word is as follows:

According to Genesis (32,29), Israel is the second name given to Jacob, son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham. The commentators of the *Ecumenical Translation of the Bible-Old Testament* (Traduction oecuménique de la Bible-Ancien Testament), 1975, think that its meaning is probably that 'God shows Himself in His Strength'. Since it has been given to a single man, it is not surprising that it was given to a community or group of people in memory of a distinguished ancestor.

The name 'Israel', therefore appeared well before Moses: several hundred years before to be exact. It is not surprising consequently to see it cited in a stele from the reign of the Pharaoh Merneptah. The fact that it is cited does not at all constitute an argument in favour of a theory which dates the Exodus before the fifth year of Merneptah's reign.

What it does do is refer to a group which it calls 'Israel', but Merneptah's stele cannot be alluding to a politically established collectivity because the inscription dates from the end of the Thirteenth century B.C. and the Kingdom of Israel was not formed until the Tenth century B.C. It must therefore refer to a human community of more modest proportions.^[97]

Nowadays, we know that the entry of 'Israel' into history was preceded by a long formative period of eight or nine centuries. This period was distinguished by the settling of many semi-Nomadic groups, especially the Amorites and the Arameans all over the region. In the same period, Patriarchs began to appear in their communities among whom were Abraham, Isaac and Jacob-Israel. The second name of this last Patriarch was used to designate the original group, the nucleus of a future political entity which was to appear long after Merneptah's reign, since the Kingdom of Israel lasted from 931 or 930 to 721 B.C.

4. The Description Contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Pharaoh's Death During the Exodus.

This event marks a very important point in the narrations contained in the Bible and the Qur'an. It stands forth very clearly in the texts. It is referred to in the Bible, not only in the Pentateuch or Torah, but also in the Psalms: the references have already been given.

It is very strange to find that Christian commentators have completely ignored it. Thus, Father de Vaux maintains the theory that the Exodus from Egypt took place in the first half or the middle of Ramesses II's reign. His theory takes no account of the fact that the Pharaoh perished during the Exodus, a fact which should make all hypotheses place the event at the end of a reign. In his *Ancient History of Israel* (Histoire ancienne d'Israël), the Head of the Biblical School of Jerusalem does not seem to be at all troubled by the contradiction between the theory he maintains and the data contained in the two Books of the Bible: the Torah and Psalms.

In his book, *Egypt and the Bible* (L'Egypte et la Bible), P. Montet places the Exodus during Merneptah's reign, but says nothing about the death of the Pharaoh who was at the head of the army following the fleeing Hebrews.

This highly surprising attitude contrasts with the Jews' outlook: Psalm 136, verse 15 gives thanks to God who "overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Sea of Rushes" and is often recited in their liturgy. They know of the agreement between this verse and the passage in Exodus (14,28-29): "The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained." There is no shadow of a doubt for them that the Pharaoh and his troops were wiped out. These same texts are present in Christian Bibles.

Christian commentators quite deliberately, and in contradiction to all the evidence, brush aside the Pharaoh's death. What is more however, some of them mention the reference made to it in the Qur'an and encourage their readers to make very strange comparisons. In the translation of the Bible directed by the Biblical School of Jerusalem[98] we find the following commentary on the Pharaoh's death by Father Couroyer.

"The Koran refers to this (Pharaoh's death) (sura 10, verses 90-92), and popular tradition has it that the Pharaoh who was drowned with his army (an event which is not mentioned in the Holy Text[99]) lives beneath the ocean where he rules over the men of the sea, i.e. the seals".

It is obvious that the uninformed reader of the Qur'an is bound to establish a connection between a statement in it which-for the commentator-contradicts the Biblical text and this absurd legend which comes from a so-called popular tradition mentioned in the commentary after the reference to the Qur'an.

The real meaning of the statement in the Qur'an on this has nothing to do with what this commentator suggests: verses 90 to 92, sura 10 inform us that the Children of Israel crossed the sea while the Pharaoh and his troops were pursuing them and that it was only when the Pharaoh was about to be drowned that he cried: "I believe there is no God except the God in which the Children of Israel believe. I am of those who submit themselves to Him." God replied: "What? Now! Thou hast rebelled and caused depravity. This day We save thee in thy body so that thou mayest be a Sign for those who will come after thee."

This is all that the sura contains on the Pharaoh's death. There is no question of the phantasms recorded by the Biblical commentator either here or anywhere else in the Qur'an. The text of the Qur'an merely states very clearly that the Pharaoh's body will be saved: that is the important piece of information.

When the Qur'an was transmitted to man by the Prophet, the bodies of all the Pharaohs who are today considered (rightly or wrongly) to have something to do with the Exodus were in their tombs of the Necropolis of Thebes, on the opposite side of the Nile from Luxor. At the time however, absolutely nothing

was known of this fact, and it was not until the end of the Nineteenth century that they were discovered there. As the Qur'an states, the body of the Pharaoh of the Exodus was in fact rescued: whichever of the Pharaohs it was, visitors may see him in the Royal Mummies Room- of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. The truth is therefore very different from the ludicrous legend that Father Couroyer has attached to the Qur'an.

5. Pharaoh Merneptah's Mummy

The mummified body of Merneptah, son of Ramesses II and Pharaoh of the Exodus-all the evidence points to this-was discovered by Loret in 1898 at Thebes in the Kings' Valley whence it was transported to Cairo. Elliot Smith removed its wrappings on the 8th of July, 1907: he gives a detailed description of this operation and the examination of the body in his book *The Royal Mummies* (1912). At that time the mummy was in a satisfactory state of preservation, in spite of deterioration in several parts. Since then, the mummy has been on show to visitors at the Cairo Museum, with his head and neck uncovered and the rest of body concealed under a cloth. It is so well hidden indeed, that until very recently, the only general photographs of the mummy that the Museum possessed were those taken by E. Smith in 1912.

In June 1975, the Egyptian high authorities very kindly allowed me to examine the parts of the Pharaoh's body that had been covered until then. They also allowed me to take photographs. When the mummy's present state was compared to the condition it was in over sixty years ago, it was abundantly clear that it had deteriorated and fragments had disappeared. The mummified tissues had suffered greatly, at the hand of man in some places and through the passage of time in others.

This natural deterioration is easily explained by the changes in the conditions of conservation from the time in the late Nineteenth century when it was discovered. Its discovery took place in the tomb of the Necropolis of Thebes where the mummy had lain for over three thousand years. Today, the mummy is displayed in a simple glass case which does not afford hermetic insulation from the outside, nor does it offer protection from pollution by micro-organisms. The mummy is exposed to fluctuations in temperature and seasonal changes in humidity: it is very far from the conditions which enabled it to remain protected from any source of deterioration for approximately three thousand years. It has lost the protection afforded by its wrappings and the advantage of remaining in the closed environment of the tomb where the temperature was more constant and the air less humid than it is in Cairo at certain times of the year. Of course, while it was in the Necropolis itself, the mummy had to withstand the visits of grave plunderers (probably very early on) and rodents: they caused a certain amount of damage, but the conditions were nevertheless (it seems) much more favourable for it to stand the test of time than they are today.

At my suggestion, special investigations were made during this examination of the mummy in June 1975. An excellent radiographic study was made by Doctors El Meligy and Ramsiys, and the examination of the interior of the thorax, through a gap in the thoracic wall, was carried out by Doctor Mustapha Manialawiy in addition to an investigation of the abdomen. This was the first example of endoscopy being applied to a mummy. This technique enabled us to see and photograph some very important details inside the body. Professor Ceccaldi performed a general medico-legal study which will be completed by an examination under the microscope of some small fragments that spontaneously fell from the mummy's body: this examination will be carried out by Professor Mignot and Doctor Durigon. I regret to say that definitive pronouncements cannot be made by the time this book goes to print.[100]

What may already be derived from this examination is the discovery of multiple lesions of the bones with broad lacunae, some of which may have been mortal-although it is not yet possible to ascertain whether some of them occurred before or after the Pharaoh's death. He most probably died either from drowning, according to the Scriptural narrations, or from very violent shocks preceding the moment when he was drowned-or both at once.

The connection of these lesions with the deterioration whose sources have been mentioned above renders the correct preservation of the mummy of the Pharaoh somewhat problematical, unless precautionary and

restorative measures are not taken very soon. These measures should ensure that the only concrete evidence which we still possess today concerning the death of the Pharaoh of the Exodus and the rescue of his body, willed by God, does not disappear with the passage of time.

It is always desirable for man to apply himself to the preservation of relics of his history, but here we have something which goes beyond that: it is the material presence of the mummified body of the man who knew Moses, resisted his pleas, pursued him as he took flight, lost his life in the process. His earthly remains were saved by the Will of God from destruction to become a sign to man, as it is written in the Qur'an.[101]

Those who seek among modern data for proof of the veracity of the Holy Scriptures will find a magnificent illustration of the verses of the Qur'an dealing with the Pharaoh's body by visiting the Royal Mummies Room of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo!

Translators' Note:

The results of these medical studies carried out in Cairo, 1976, were read by the author before several French learned societies, including the 'Académie Nationale de Médecine' (National Academy of Medicine), during the first part of 1976. The knowledge of these results led the Egyptian Authorities to take the decision to transport the mummy of Ramesses II to France. Thus it arrived for treatment in Paris on the 26th September 1976.

The Qur'an, Hadith and Modern Science

The Qur'an does not constitute the sole source of doctrine and legislation in Islam. During Muhammad's life and after his death, complementary information of a legislative nature was indeed sought in the study of the words and deeds of the Prophet.

Although writing was used in the transmission of hadith from the very beginning, a lot of this came also from the oral tradition. Those who undertook to assemble them in collections made the kind of enquiries which are always very taxing before recording accounts of past events. They nevertheless had a great regard for accuracy in their arduous task of collecting information. This is illustrated by the fact that for all of the Prophet's sayings, the most venerable collections always bear the names of those responsible for the account, going right back to the person who first collected the information from members of Muhammad's family or his companions.

A very large number of collections of the Prophet's words and deeds thus appeared under the title of Hadiths. The exact meaning of the word is 'utterances', but it is also customary to use it to mean the narration of his deeds.

Some of the collections were made public in the decades following Muhammad's death. Just over two hundred years were to pass before some of the most important collections appeared. The most authentic record of the facts is in the collections of Al Bukhari and Muslim, which date from over two hundred years after Muhammad and which provide a wider trustworthy account. In recent years, a bilingual Arabic/English edition has been provided by Doctor Muhammed Muhsin Khan, of the Islamic University of Madina.[102] Al Bukhari's work is generally regarded as the most authentic after the Qur'an and was translated into French (1903-1914) by Houdas and Marcais under the title *Les Traditions Islamiques* (Islamic Traditions). The Hadiths are therefore accessible to those who do not speak Arabic. One must, however, be wary of certain translations made by Europeans, including the French translation, because they contain inaccuracies and untruths which are often more of interpretation than of actual translation. Sometimes, they considerably

change the real meaning of a hadith, to such an extent indeed that they attribute a sense to it which it does not contain.

As regards their origins, some of the hadiths and Gospels have one point in common which is that neither of them was compiled by an author who was an eyewitness of the events he describes. Nor were they compiled until some time after the events recorded. The hadiths, like the Gospels, have not all been accepted as authentic. Only a small number of them receive the quasi-unanimous approval of specialists in Muslim Tradition so that, except al-Muwatta, Sahih Muslim and Sahih al-Bukhari, one finds in the same book, hadiths presumed to be authentic side by side with ones which are either dubious, or should be rejected outright.

In contrast to Canonic Gospels which though questioned by some modern scholars but which have never been contested by Christian high authorities, even those hadiths that are most worthy to be considered as authentic have been the subject of criticism. Very early in the history of Islam, masters in Islamic thought exercised a thorough criticism of the hadiths, although the basic book (The Qur'an) remained the book of reference and was not to be questioned.

I thought it of interest to delve into the literature of the hadiths to find out how Muhammad is said to have expressed himself, outside the context of written Revelation, on subjects that were to be explained by scientific progress in following centuries. Al-though Sahih Muslim is also an authentic collection, in this study I have strictly limited myself to the texts of the hadiths which are generally considered to be the most authentic, i.e. those of Al Bukhari. I have always tried to bear in mind the fact that these texts were compiled by men according to data received from a tradition which was partially oral and that they record certain facts with a greater or lesser degree of accuracy, depending on the individual errors made by those who transmitted the narrations. These texts are different from other hadiths which were transmitted by a very large number of people and are unquestionably authentic.[103]

I have compared the findings made during an examination of the hadiths with those already set out in the section on the Qur'an and modern science. The results of this comparison speak for themselves. The difference is in fact quite staggering between the accuracy of the data contained in the Qur'an, when compared with modern scientific knowledge, and the highly questionable character of certain statements in the hadiths on subjects whose tenor is essentially scientific. These are the only hadiths to have been dealt with in this study.

Hadiths which have as their subject the interpretation of certain verses of the Qur'an sometimes lead to commentaries which are hardly acceptable today.

We have already seen the great significance of one verse (sura 36, verse 36) dealing with the Sun which "runs its course to a settled place". Here is the interpretation given of it in a hadith: "At sunset, the sun . . . prostrates itself underneath the Throne, and takes permission to rise again, and it is permitted and then (a time will come when) it will be about to prostrate itself . . . it will ask permission to go on its course . . . it will be ordered to return whence it has come and so it will rise in the West . . ." (Sahih Al Bukhari). The original text (The Book of the Beginning of the Creation, Vol. IV page 283, part 54, chapter IV, number 421) is obscure and difficult to translate. This passage nevertheless contains an allegory which implies the notion of a course the Sun runs in relation to the Earth: science has shown the contrary to be the case. The authenticity of this hadith is doubtful (*Zanni*).

Another passage from the same work (The Book of the Beginning of the Creation, vol. IV page 283, part 54, chapter 6, number 430) estimates the initial stages in the development of the embryo very strangely in time: a forty-day period for the grouping of the elements which are to constitute the human being, another forty days during which the embryo is represented as 'something which clings', and a third forty-day period when the embryo is designated by the term 'chewed flesh'. Once the angels have intervened to define what this individual's future is to be, a soul is breathed into him. This description of embryonic evolution does not agree with modern data.

Whereas the Qur'an gives absolutely no practical advice on the remedial arts, except for a single comment (sura 16, verse 69) on the possibility of using honey as a therapeutic aid (without indicating the illness involved), the hadiths devote a great deal of space to these subjects. A whole section of Al Bukhari's collection (part 76) is concerned with medicine. In the French translation by Houdas and Marcais it goes from page 62 to 91 of volume 4, and in Doctor Muhammad Muhsin Khan's bilingual Arabic/English edition from page 395 to 452, of volume VII. There can be no doubt that these pages contain some hadiths which are conjectural (*Zanni*), but they are interesting as a whole because they provide an outline of the opinions on various medical subjects that it was possible to hold at the time. One might add to them several hadiths inserted in other parts of Al Bukhari's collection which have a medical tenor.

This is how we come to find statements in them on the harms caused by the Evil Eye, witchcraft and the possibility of exorcism; although a certain restriction is imposed on the paid use of the Qur'an for this purpose. There is a hadith which stresses that certain kinds of date may serve as protection against the effects of magic, and magic may be used against poisonous snakebites.

We should not be surprised however to find that at a time when there were limited possibilities for the scientific use of drugs, people were advised to rely on simple practices; natural treatments such as blood-letting, cupping, and cauterization, head-shaving against lice, the use of camel's milk and certain seeds such as black cumin, and plants such as indian Qust. It was also recommended to burn a mat made of palm-tree leaves and put the ash from it into a wound to stop bleeding. In emergencies, all available means that might genuinely be of use had to be employed. It does not *seem-a priori* to be a very good idea, however, to suggest that people drink camel's urine.

It is difficult today to subscribe to certain explanations of subjects related to various illnesses. Among them, the following might be mentioned:

--the origins of a fever. there are four statements bearing witness to the fact that "fever is from the heat of hell" (Al Bukhari, The Book of Medicine, vol. VII, chapter 28, page 416).

--the existence of a remedy for every illness: "No disease God created, but He created its treatment" (Ibid. chapter 1, page 396). This concept is illustrated by the Hadith of the Fly. "If a fly falls into the vessel of any of you, let him dip all of it (into the vessel) and then throw it away, for in one of its wings there is a disease and in the other there is healing (antidote for it). i.e. the treatment for that disease" (Ibid. chapter 15-16, pages 462-463, also The Book of the Beginning of Creation part 54, chapters 15 & 16.)

--abortion provoked by the sight of a snake (which can also blind). This is mentioned in The Book of the Beginning of Creation, Vol. IV(chapter 13 and 14, pages 330 & 334).

--haemorrhages between periods. The Book of Menses (Menstrual Periods) Vol. VI, part 6, pages 490 & 495 contains two hadiths on the cause of haemorrhages between periods (chapters 21 & 28). They refer to two women: in the case of the first, there is a description (undetailed) of the symptoms, with a statement that the haemorrhage comes from a blood vessel; in the second, the woman had experienced haemorrhages between periods for seven years, and the same vascular origin is stated. One might suggest hypotheses as to the real causes of the above, but it is not easy to see what arguments could have been produced at the time to support this diagnosis. This could nevertheless have been quite accurate.

--the statement that diseases are not contagious. Al Bukhari's collection of hadiths refers in several places (chapters 19, 25, 30, 31, 53 and 54, Vol. VII, part 76, of the Book of Medicine) to certain special cases, e.g. leprosy (page 408), plague (pages 418 & 422), camel's scabies (page 447), and also provides general statements. The latter are however placed side by side with glaringly contradictory remarks: it is recommended, for example, not to go to areas where there is plague, and to stay away from lepers.

Consequently, it is possible to conclude that certain hadiths exist which are scientifically unacceptable. There is a doubt surrounding their authenticity. The purpose of reference to them lies solely in the comparison that

they occasion with the verses of the Qur'an mentioned above: these do not contain a single inaccurate statement. This observation clearly has considerable importance.

One must indeed remember that at the Prophet's death, the teachings that were received from this fell into two groups:

--firstly, a large number of Believers knew the Qur'an by heart because, like the Prophet, they had recited it many, many times; transcriptions of the text of the Qur'an already existed moreover, which were made at the time of the Prophet and even before the Hegira[104].

-secondly, the members of his following who were closest to him and the Believers who had witnessed his words and deeds had remembered them and relied on them for support, in addition to the Qur'an, when defining a nascent doctrine and legislation.

In the years that were to follow the Prophet's death, texts were to be compiled which recorded the two groups of teachings he had left. The first gathering of hadiths was performed roughly forty years after the Hegira, but a first collection of Qur'anic texts had been made beforehand under Caliph Abu Bakr, and in particular Caliph Uthman, the second of whom published a definitive text during his Caliphate, i.e. between the twelfth and twenty-fourth years following Muhammad's death.

What must be heavily stressed is the disparity between these two groups of texts, both from a literary point of view and as regards their contents. It would indeed be unthinkable to compare the style of the Qur'an with that of the hadiths. What is more, when the contents of the two texts are compared in the light of modern scientific data, one is struck by the oppositions between them. I hope I have succeeded in showing what follows:

--on the one hand, statements in the Qur'an which often appear to be commonplace, but which conceal data that science was later to bring to light.

--on the other hand, certain statements in the hadiths which are shown to be in absolute agreement with the ideas of their times but which contain opinions that are deemed scientifically unacceptable today. These occur in an aggregate of statements concerning Islamic doctrine and legislation, whose authenticity is unquestioningly acknowledged.

Finally, it must be pointed out that Muhammad's own attitude was quite different towards the Qur'an from what it was towards his personal sayings. The Qur'an was proclaimed by him to be a divine Revelation. Over a period of twenty years, the Prophet classified its sections with the greatest of care, as we have seen. The Qur'an represented what had to be written down during his own lifetime and learned by heart to become part of the liturgy of prayers. The hadiths are said, in principle, to provide an account of his deeds and personal reflections, but he left it to others to find an example in them for their own behaviour and to make them public however they liked: he did not give any instructions.

In view of the fact that only a limited number of hadiths may be considered to express the Prophet's thoughts with certainty, the others must contain the thoughts of the men of his time, in particular with regard to the subjects referred to here. When these dubious or inauthentic hadiths are compared to the text of the Qur'an, we can measure the extent to which they differ. This comparison highlights (as if there were still any need to) the striking difference between the writings of this period, which are riddled with scientific inaccurate statements, and the Qur'an, the Book of Written Revelation, that is free from errors of this kind.[105]

General Conclusions

At the end of this study, a fact that stands forth very clearly is that the predominant opinion held in the West on the TExTs of the Holy Scriptures we possess today is hardly very realistic. We have seen the conditions, times and ways in which the elements constituting the Old Testament, the Gospels and the Qur'an were collected and written down: the circumstances attendant upon the birth of the Scriptures for these three Revelations differed widely in each case, a fact which had extremely important consequences concerning the authenticity of the texts and certain aspects of their contents.

The Old Testament represents a vast number of literary works written over a period of roughly nine hundred years. It forms a highly disparate mosaic whose pieces have, in the course of centuries, been changed by man. Some parts were added to what already existed, so that today it is sometimes very difficult indeed to identify where they came from originally.

Through an account of Jesus's words and deeds, the Gospels were intended to make known to men the teachings he wished to leave them on completion of his earthly mission. Unfortunately, the authors of the Gospels were not eyewitnesses of the data they recorded. They were spokesmen who expressed data that were quite simply the information that had been preserved by the various Judeo-Christian communities on Jesus's public life, passed down by oral traditions or writings which no longer exist today, and which constituted an intermediate stage between the oral tradition and the definitive texts.

This is the light in which the Judeo-Christian Scriptures should be viewed today, and-to be objective-one should abandon the classic concepts held by experts in exegesis.

The inevitable result of the multiplicity of sources is the existence of contradictions and oppositions: many examples have been given of these. The authors of the Gospels had (when talking of Jesus) the same tendency to magnify certain facts as the poets of French Medieval literature in their narrative poems. The consequence of this was that events were presented from each individual narrator's point of view and the authenticity of the facts reported in many cases proved to be extremely dubious. In view of this, the few statements contained in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures which may have something to do with modern knowledge should always be examined with the circumspection that the questionable nature of their authenticity demands.

Contradictions, improbabilities and incompatibilities with modern scientific data may be easily explained in terms of what has just been said above. Christians are nevertheless very surprised when they realize this, so great have been the continuous and far-reaching efforts made until now by many official commentators to camouflage the very obvious results of modern studies, under cunning dialectical acrobatics orchestrated by apologetic lyricism. A case in point are the genealogies of Jesus given in Matthew and Luke, which were contradictory and scientifically unacceptable. Examples have been provided which reveal this attitude very clearly. John's Gospel has been given special attention because there are very important differences between it and the other three Gospels, especially with regard to the fact that his Gospel does not describe the institution of the Eucharist: this is not generally known.

The Qur'anic Revelation has a history which is fundamentally different from the other two. It spanned a period of some twenty years and, as soon as it was transmitted to Muhammad by Archangel Gabriel, Believers learned it by heart. It was also written down during Muhammad's life. The last recensions of the Qur'an were effected under Caliph Uthman starting some twelve years after the Prophet's death and finishing twenty-four years after it. They had the advantage of being checked by people who already knew the text by heart, for they had learned it at the time of the Revelation itself and had subsequently recited it constantly. Since then, we know that the text has been scrupulously preserved. It does not give rise to any problems of authenticity.

The Qur'an follows on from the two Revelations that preceded it and is not only free from contradictions in its narrations, the sign of the various human manipulations to be found in the Gospels, but provides a quality all of its own for those who examine it objectively and in the light of science i.e. its complete agreement with modern scientific data. What is more, statements are to be found in it (as has been shown) that are connected with science: and yet it is unthinkable that a man of Muhammad's time could have been the author of them.

Modern scientific knowledge therefore allows us to understand certain verses of the Qur'an which, until now, it has been impossible to interpret.

The comparison of several Biblical and Qur'anic narrations of the same subject shows the existence of fundamental differences between statements in the former, which are scientifically unacceptable, and declarations in the latter which are in perfect agreement with modern data: this was the case of the Creation and the Flood, for example. An extremely important complement to the Bible was found in the text of the Qur'an on the subject of the history of the Exodus, where the two texts were very much in agreement with archaeological findings, in the dating of the time of Moses. Besides, there are major differences between the Qur'an and the Bible on the other subjects: they serve to disprove all that has been maintained-without a scrap of evidence-concerning the allegation that Muhammad is supposed to have copied the Bible to produce the text of the Qur'an.

When a comparative study is made between the statements connected with science to be found in the collection of hadiths, which are attributed to Muhammad but are often of dubious authenticity (although they reflect the beliefs of the period), and the data of a similar kind in the Qur'an, the disparity becomes so obvious that any notion of a common origin is ruled out.

In view of the level of knowledge in Muhammad's day, it is inconceivable that many of the statements in the Qur'an which are connected with science could have been the work of a man. It is, moreover, perfectly legitimate, not only to regard the Qur'an as the expression of a Revelation, but also to award it a very special place, on account of the guarantee of authenticity it provides and the presence in it of scientific statements which, when studied today, appear as a challenge to explanation in human terms.

Endnotes

1. What is meant by Torah are the first five books of the Bible, in other words the Pentateuch of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy).
2. Pub. Ancora, Rome.
3. Pub. Cerf, Paris
4. Pub. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris "Que sais-je?" collection
5. Translator's Note: Published December 1975 by Les Editions du Cerf and Les Bergers et les Mages, Paris
6. So called because God is named Yahweh in this text.
7. So called because God is named Elohim in this text.
8. From the preachers in the Temple at Jerusalem.
9. Paris, 1974 edition, Vol. a, pp. 246-263.
10. We shall see in the next chapter, when confronted with modern scientific data, the extent of the narrative errors committed by authors of the Sacerdotal version on the subject of the antiquity of man on Earth, his

situation in time and the course of the Creation. They are obviously errors arising from manipulation of the texts.

11. Pub. w. M. Collins & Sons for the British and Foreign Bible Society, 1952.

12. No. 38, 1974, pp. 95-112)

13. Introduction to Genesis, page 35.

14. Ibid., page 34

15. Pub. Le Centurion, Paris

16. Pub. Le Centurion, 1966, Paris

17. Pub. Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1973

18. Pub. Desclée and Co., Paris.

19. Pub. Editions du Cerf, Paris

20. Pub. Beauchesne, Coll. 'Le Point théologique'. Paris. 1974

21. Pious XII was Pope from 1939 to 1959

22. One could note here that all these writings were later to be classed as Apocrypha, i.e. they had to be concealed by the victorious Church which was born of Paul's success. This Church made obvious excisions in the Gospel literature and retained only the four Canonic Gospels.

23. Pub. Editions du Cerf et Les Bergers et les Mages, Paris.

24. Pub. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1967

25. The three Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke.

26. The fact that it is in contradiction with Luke's Gospel will be dealt with in a separate chapter.

27. The Samaritans' religious code was the Torah or Pentateuch; they lived in the expectation of the Messiah and were faithful to most Jewish observances, but they had built a rival Temple to the one at Jerusalem.

28. It has been thought that the Judeo-Christian community that Matthew belonged to might just as easily have been situated at Alexandria. O. Culmann refers to this hypothesis along with many others.

29. An American film which parodies the life of Jesus.

30. In another part of his Gospel Matthew again refers to this episode but without being precise about the time (16, 1-4). The same is true for Luke (11, 29-32). We shall see later on how in Mark, Jesus is said to have declared that no sign would be given to that generation (Mark 8, 11-12).

31. It is not possible to establish a comparison with John because he does not refer to the institution of the Eucharist during the Last Supper prior to the Passion.

32. Words.

33. Nestlé-Aland Pub. United Bible Societies, London, 1971

34. The Gospels sometimes refer to Jesus's 'brothers' and 'sisters' (Matthew 13, 46-60 and 64-68; Mark 6, 1-6; John 7, 3 and 2, 12). The Greek words used, adelphoi and adelphai, indeed signify biological brothers and sisters; they are most probably a defective translation of the original Semitic words which just mean 'kin'. in this instance they were perhaps cousins.

35. A. Tricot, Little Dictionary of the New Testament (Petit Dictionnaire du Nouveau Testament in "La Sainte Bible", Desclée, Pub. Paris)

36. Pub. Desclée, coll. 'Parole et Prière', Paris.

37. Pub. Editions du Seuil, Paris.

38. Although the author assures us that he knows of the existence of these supposed family archives from the Ecclesiastic History by Eusebius Pamphili (about whose respectability much could be said), it is difficult to see why Jesus's family should have two genealogical trees that were necessarily different just because each of the two so-called 'historians' gave a genealogy substantially different from the other concerning the names of those who figure among Jesus's ancestors.

39. 'No other New Testament author can claim that distinction', he notes.

40. It is difficult to see how there could have been!

41. i.e. the eleven Apostles; Judas, the twelfth, was already dead.

42. In fact, for John it was during the Last Supper itself that Jesus delivered the long speech that mentions the Paraclete.

43. Nestlé and Aland. Pub. United Bibles Societies, London, 1971.

44. This manuscript was written in the Fourth or Fifth century A.D. It was discovered in 1812 on Mount Sinai by Agnes S.-Lewis and is so named because the first text had been covered by a later one which, when obliterated, revealed the original.

45. Many translations and commentaries of the Gospel, especially older ones, use the word 'Consoler' to translate this, but it is totally inaccurate.

46. At a certain period of history, hostility to Islam, in whatever shape or form, even coming from declared enemies of the church, was received with the most heartfelt approbation by high dignitaries of the Catholic Church. Thus Pope Benedict XIV, who is reputed to have been the greatest Pontiff of the Eighteenth century, unhesitatingly sent his blessing to Voltaire. This was in thanks for the dedication to him of the tragedy *Mohammed or Fanaticism* (Mahomet ou le Fanatisme) 1741, a coarse satire that any clever scribbler of bad faith could have written on any subject. In spite of a bad start, the play gained sufficient prestige to be included in the repertoire of the Comédie-Francaise.

47. Lumen Gentium is the title of a document produced by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1966)

48. God.

49. Translators of the Qur'an, even famous ones, have not resisted the secular habit of putting into their translations things that are not really in the Arabic text at all. One can indeed add titles to the text that are not in the original without changing the text itself, but this addition changes the general meaning. R. Blachère, for example, in his well-known translation (Pub. Maisonneuve et Larose, Paris, 1966, page 115) inserts a title that does not figure in the Qur'an: Duties of the Holy War (Obligations de la guerre sainte). This is at the beginning of a passage that is indisputably a call to arms, but does not have the character that has been ascribed to it. After reading this, how can the reader who only has access to the Qur'an via translations fail to think that a Muslim's duty is to wage holy war?

50. Muhammad's departure from Makka to Madina, 622 A.D.

51. Muhammad was totally overwhelmed by these words. We shall return to an interpretation of them, especially with regard to the fact that Muhammad could neither read nor write.

52. In the text: Qur'an which also means 'reading'.

53. The absence of diacritical marks, for example, could make a verb either active or passive and in some instances, masculine or feminine. More often than not however, this was hardly of any great consequence since the context indicated the meaning in many instances.

54. The Biblical description mentioned here is taken from the so-called Sacerdotal version discussed in the first part of this work; the description taken from the so-called Yahvist version has been compressed into the space of a few lines in today's version of the Bible and is too insubstantial to be considered here.

55. 'Sabbath' in Hebrew means 'to rest'.

56. See table on last page of present work for equivalence between Latin and Arabic letters.

57. It is to be noted that while the Bible calls both Sun and Moon 'lights', here, as always in the Qur'an, they are differently named; the first is called 'Light' (*nur*) and the second is compared in this verse to a 'lamp' (*siraj*) producing light'. We shall see later how other epithets are applied to the Sun.

58. Apart from the Qur'an, we often find the number 7 meaning plurality in texts from Muhammad's time, or from the first centuries following him, which record his words (hadiths).

59. This statement that the Creation did not make God at all weary stands out as an obvious reply to the Biblical description, referred to in the first part of the present book, where God is said to have rested on the seventh day from the preceding days' work!

60. As regards the Moon, its gradual separation from the Earth following the deceleration of its rotation is an acknowledged probability.

61. This text completely overshadows the few lines contained in the Yahvist version. The latter is too brief and too vague for the scientist to take account of it.

62. Pub. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1952.

63. I have often heard those who go to great lengths to find a human explanation-and no other-to all the problems raised by the Qur'an say the following: "if the Book contains surprising statements on astronomy, it is because the Arabs were very knowledgeable on this subject." In so doing they forget the fact that, in general, science in Islamic countries is very much post-Qur'an, and that the scientific knowledge of this great period would in any case not have been sufficient for a human being to write some of the verses to be found in the Qur'an. This will be shown in the following paragraphs.

64. Here, the sky and a star are used to bear witness to the importance of what is to come in the text.
65. It is known that when a meteorite arrives at the upper layers of the atmosphere, it may produce the luminous phenomenon of a 'shooting star'.
66. Pub. Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore (Pakistan)
67. This verse is followed by an invitation to recognize God's blessings. It forms the subject of the whole of the sura that bears the title 'The Beneficent'.
68. Whenever the pronoun 'We' appears in the verses of the text quoted here, it refers to God.
69. 1. The city of Sanaa, the capital of the Yemen, was inhabited in Muhammad's time. It lies at an altitude of nearly 7,900 feet above sea level.
70. It is secreted by the reproductive glands and contains spermatozoons.
71. We saw in the Introduction to the third part of this book what one was expected to believe about predestination in its application to man himself.
72. One might note in passing, that this last verse is the only one in the Qur'an that refers to the possibility of a remedy for man. Honey can indeed be useful for certain diseases. Nowhere else in the Qur'an is a reference made to any remedial arts, contrary to what may have been said about this subject.
73. Pub. Flammarion, 1972, Paris.
74. It makes this journey over a period of six months, and comes back to its departure point with a maximum delay of one week.
75. Pub. G. P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1966, Paris,
76. Pub. Club Français du Livre, 1971, Paris.
77. It is estimated that in one cubic centimetre of sperm there are 25 million spermatozoons with, under normal conditions, an ejaculation of several cubic centimetres.
78. God is speaking
79. In another verse (sura 6, verse 98) a place of sojourn is mentioned. It is expressed in a term very similar to the preceding one and would also seem to signify the maternal uterus. Personally, I believe this to be the meaning of the verse, but a detailed interpretation would involve much lengthier explanation which is beyond the scope of this book.
80. Now that certain notions concerning the chronology of ancient times have been established, and the imaginary dates given by the authors of the Sacerdotal text of the Old Testament are no longer credible, those dates have quickly been suppressed in Bibles. In the case of those genealogies that have been preserved, modern commentators of books intended for mass publication fail to draw the readers' attention to the errors they contain.
81. Surely 'seven' here indicates 'many', as it often does in the Semitic languages of the time.
82. We shall later see that the figure has been grossly exaggerated.

83. In Hebrew 'yam souf'.

84. We shall return to this subject later, when we call upon Father de Vaux's help in examining this reference in Kings I.

85. Pub. Delachaux and Niestlé, Neufchatel, 1959.

86. The skin lesions are clearly visible on the mummies of these Pharaohs preserved in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

87. Pub. Desclée de Brouwer, 1970, Paris.

88. Pub. J. Gabalda and Co., 1971, Paris.

89. There can be no doubt that in the Golden Age of the ptolemies, historical documents on Antiquity were preserved at Alexandria, only to be destroyed at the time of the Roman conquest; a loss which is keenly felt today.

90. In the Holy Histories of the early 20th century, as in the History by Abbe H. Lesetre, intended for religious instruction, the Exodus is mentioned as having taken place during Merneptah's reign in Egypt.

91. Pub. Delachaux and Niestlé, Neuchatel, 1959.

92. The letter 'e' figures as the *ayin* in Hebrew.

93. It is strange to note moreover, that in old editions of the Bible, commentators did not understand the meaning of the word at all. In the French edition of the Clementine Bible, 1621, for example, an interpretation of the word 'Ramesses' is given which makes total nonsense: 'Thunder of Vermin' (sic).

94. The period spanning the two reigns Sethos I-Ramesses II, which is said to have lasted roughly eighty years, is out of the question: Sethos I's reign-which was too short for this-does not square with the very long stay in Midian which Moses made as an adult and which took place during the reign of the first of the two Pharaohs he was to know.

95. The word is followed by a generic determinative which leaves no doubt as to the fact that this term signifies a 'human community or group'.

96. In his book *'The Ancient History of Israel'* (Histoire ancienne d'Israël)

97. "The name 'Israel' (in the stele) is accompanied by the generic determinative 'people' instead of the determinative 'country', as is the case for the other proper names in the stele" writes Father B. Couroyer, Professor at the Biblical School of Jerusalem, in his commentary to the translation of the Book of Exodus (Pub. Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1968, page 12).

98. L'Exode (Exodus), 1968, page 73, Pub. Les Editions du Cerf, Paris.

99. There can be no doubt that this commentator is referring to the Bible.

100. November, 1975 for the First French edition.

101. The mummy of Ramesses II, who was another witness to Moses's story, has been the subject of a study comparable to the one carried out on the mummy of Merneptah; the same restoration work is required for it.

102. Pub. Sethi Straw Board Mills (Conversion) Ltd and Taleem-ul-Qur'an Trust, Gujranwala, Cantt. Pakistan. 1st edition 1971, for Sahih Al Bukhari.

103. Muslim specialists designate the first by the word *Zanni* and the second by the word *Qat'i*.

104. The Hegira was in 622, ten years before Muhammad's death.

105. The truth of the hadiths, from a religious point of view, is beyond question. When they deal, however, with earthly affairs there is no difference between the Prophet and other humans. One hadith gives an account of an utterance of the Prophet: "Whenever I command you to do something related to Religion do obey, and if I command you something according to my own opinion (do remember this) I am a human being".

Al Saraksi in his 'Principles' (Al Usul) transmitted this statement as follows: "If I bring something to you on your religion, do act according to it, and if I bring you something related to this world, then you have a better knowledge of your own earthly affairs".

Back cover

In his objective study of the texts, Maurice Bucaille clears' away many preconceived ideas about the Old Testament, the Gospels and the Qur'an. He tries, in this collection of Writings, to separate what belongs to Revelation from what is the product of error or human interpretation. His study sheds new light on the Holy Scriptures. At the end of a gripping account, he places the Believer before a point of cardinal importance: the continuity of a Revelation emanating from the same God, with modes of expression that differ in the course of time. It leads us to meditate upon those factors which, in our day, should spiritually unite rather than divide- Jews, Christians and Muslims.

As a surgeon, Maurice Bucaille has often been in a situation where he was able to examine not only people's bodies, but their souls. This is how he was struck by the existence of Muslim piety and by aspects of Islam which remain unknown to the vast majority of non-Muslims. In his search for explanations which are otherwise difficult to obtain, he learnt Arabic and studied the Qur'an. In it, he was surprised to find statements on natural phenomena whose meaning can only be understood through modern scientific knowledge.

He then turned to the question of the authenticity of the writings that constitute the Holy Scriptures of the monotheistic religions. Finally, in the case of the Bible, he proceeded to a confrontation between these writings and scientific data.

The results of his research into the Judeo-Christian Revelation and the Qur'an are set out in this book.

ISLAM THE STRAIGHT PATH THE MESSAGE AND THE WAYS OF THE PROPHETS

PART1

Jesus Muhammad and the Bible

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ABOUT FAISAL FAHIM: FAISAL WAS BORN IN BANGLADESH. HE SPENT HIS CHILDHOOD WITH HIS GRANDPARENTS IN BANGLADESH & HE SAW THEM PRAYING 5 TIMES A DAY. HE CAME TO AMERICA AT A YOUNG AGE AND HE IS AN AMERICAN BANGLADESHI MUSLIM. IN AMERICA HE LIVED WITH HIS PARENTS. HE WENT TO SCHOOLS IN NY. HE WENT TO VISIT BANGLADESH IN 2009 & HE SAW SOME VIDEOS OF DR.ZAKIR NAIK ON TV. THE VIDEOS WERE ABOUT SPREADING THE KNOWLEDGE OF ISLAM WITH MUSLIMS AND NONMUSLIMS. HE WAS INSPIRED BY DR.ZAKIR NAIK. HE LOVES ISLAM & BELIEVES ISLAM IS A RELIGION OF PEACE & MERCY. SO HE LIKES TO SPREAD THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM TO NONMUSLIMS AND MUSLIMS.

According to Islam the statements of the Torah and Bible which do not contradict but rather matches with Quran Hadith and Islam are accurate but other statements which goes against the teachings of Quran Sunnah prophet Muhammad pbuh and Islam are errors made by humans. So those are not from God. Muslims believe prophet Muhammad is mentioned in the OT and NT = Torah and Bible. But Jews and Christians deny it. So they follow the teachings of the Church and synagogue and do not follow what is written in their holy books.

1. MUHAMMAD (PBUH) PROPHESED IN THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY:

Almighty God speaks to Moses in Book of Deuteronomy chapter 18 verse 18:

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

The Christians say that this prophecy refers to Jesus (pbuh) because Jesus (pbuh) was like Moses (pbuh). Moses (pbuh) was a Jew, as well as Jesus (pbuh) was a Jew. Moses (pbuh) was a Prophet and Jesus (pbuh) was also a Prophet. If these two are the only criteria for this prophecy to be fulfilled, then all the Prophets of the Bible who came after

Moses (pbuh) such as Solomon, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Malachi, John the Baptist, etc. (pbuh) will

fulfill this prophecy since all were Jews as well as prophets.

However, it is Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who is like Moses (pbuh):

- i) Both had a father and a mother, while Jesus (pbuh) was born miraculously without any male intervention.
[Mathew 1:18 and Luke 1:35 and also Al-Qur'an 3:42-47]
- ii) Both were married and had children. Jesus (pbuh) according to the Bible did not marry nor had children.
- iii) Both died natural deaths. Jesus (pbuh) has been raised up alive. (4:157-158)
Muhammad (pbuh) is from among the brethren of Moses (pbuh). Arabs are brethren of Jews. Abraham (pbuh) had two sons: Ishmail and Isaac (pbuh). The Arabs are the descendants of Ishmail (pbuh) and the Jews are the descendants of Isaac (pbuh). Words in the mouth: Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was unlettered and whatever revelations he received from Almighty God he repeated them verbatim. "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."
[Deuteronomy 18:18]
- iv) Both besides being Prophets were also kings i.e. they could inflict capital punishment. Jesus (pbuh) said, "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36).

p2 v) Both were accepted as Prophets by their people in their lifetime but Jesus (pbuh) was rejected by his people. John chapter 1 verse 11 states, "He came unto his own, but his own received him not."

iv) Both brought new laws and new regulations for their people. Jesus (pbuh) according to the Bible did not bring any new laws. (Mathew 5:17-18).

2.

It is Mentioned in the book of Deuteronomy chapter 18:19

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not harken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

3.

Muhammad (pbuh) is prophesised in the book of Isaiah:

It is mentioned in the book of Isaiah chapter 29 verse 12: "And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned." When Archangel Gabrail commanded Muhammad (pbuh) by saying Iqra - "Read", he replied, "I am not learned".

4.

prophet Muhammad (pbuh) mentioned by name in the old testament:

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is mentioned by name in the Song of Solomon chapter 5 verse 16: prophet Muhammad (pbuh) mentioned by name in the old testament: Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is mentioned by name in the Song of Solomon chapter 5 verse 16: "Hikko Mamittakim we kullo Muhammadim Zehdoodeh wa Zehraee Bayna Jerusalem." "His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." In the Hebrew language im is added for respect. Similarly im is added after the name of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to make it Muhammadim. In English translation they have even translated the name of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as "altogether lovely", but in the Old Testament in Hebrew, the name of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is yet present. It's majestic plural noun like Elohim which refers to 1 God only. so Muhammadim also refers to 1 Muhammad even though im can refer also to be plural. (Edited by Faisal)

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the New Testament: Al-Qur'an Chapter 61 Verse 6: "And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said, 'O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me and giving glad tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmed.' But when he came to them with clear signs, they said, 'This is evident sorcery!' "All the prophecies mentioned in the Old Testament regarding Muhammad (pbuh) besides applying to the Jews also hold good for the Christians.

1.

John chapter 14 verse 16:

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"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."

2.

Gospel of John chapter 15 verse 26:

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

3.

Gospel of John chapter 16 verse 7:

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you".

"Ahmed" or "Muhammad" meaning "the one who praises" or "the praised one" is almost the translation of the

Greek word Periclytos. In the Gospel of John 14:16, 15:26, and 16:7. The word 'Comforter' is used in the English translation for the Greek word Paracletos which means advocate or a kind friend rather than a comforter.

Paracletos is the warped reading for Periclytos. Jesus (pbuh) actually prophesised Ahmed by name. Even the

Greek word Paraclete refers to the Prophet (pbuh) who is a mercy for all creatures. Some Christians say that the Comforter mentioned in these prophecies refers to the Holy Spirit. They fail to realise that the prophecy clearly says that only if Jesus (pbuh) departs will the Comforter come. The Bible states that the

Holy Spirit was already present on earth before and during the time of Jesus (pbuh), in the womb of Elizabeth, and again when Jesus (pbuh) was being baptised, etc. Hence this prophecy refers to none other than Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

4.

Gospel of John chapter 16 verse 12-14:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me".

The Spirit of Truth, spoken about in this prophecy refers to none other than Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). All quotations of the Bible are taken from the King James Version. Written By DR.ZAKIR NAIK.

112. Surah Al-Ikhlaas 1. Say (O Muhammad (ﷺ)): "He is Allah, (the) One. 2. "Allah-us-Samad (The Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, He neither eats nor drinks). 3. "He begets not, nor was He begotten; 4. "And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him." Quran (The punishment of raping a woman in Islam is death penalty)!!! If anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind. Quran.

In Quran, it says "If you kill one human being it's as if you have killed the entire of humanity. And if you save one human being. It's as you saved the entire of humanity". So, for killing you go to hell, for saving you go to heaven. There was no suicide bombers in the time of prophet Mohammad.

Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may

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well ask, is there any man greater than he?[Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turquie*, Paris 1854 Vol. II, pp. 276-77.]

It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder; the same pure and perfect impression that he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran... The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. I believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God., is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honors of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue; and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion.[Edward Gibbon and Simon Ockley, *History of the Saracen Empire*, London 1870, p. 54.]

He was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Popes pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar: without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue; if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammad, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports.[Bosworth Smifu, *Mohammad and Mohammadanism*. London 1874, p. 92.]

.It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher.[Annie Besant, *The Life and Teachings of Muhammad*, Madras 1932, p.4]

His readiness to undergo persecutions for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad.[W. Montgomery, *Mohammad at Mecca*, Oxford, 1953, p. 52.]

Thomas Carlyle, struck by this philosophy of life writes “and then also Islam-that we must submit to God; that our whole strength lies in resigned submission to Him, whatsoever he does to us, the thing he sends to us, even if death and worse than death, shall be good, shall be best; we resign ourselves to God.” The same author continues “If this be Islam, says Goethe, do we not all live in Islam?” Carlyle himself answers this question of Goethe and says “Yes, all of us that have any moral life, we all live so. This is yet the highest wisdom that heaven has revealed to our earth.”

On the authority of Abu Malik al-Harith bin Asim al-Asharee (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Purity is half of iman (faith). ‘Al-hamdu lillah (praise be to Allah)’ fills the scales, and ‘subhan-Allah (how far is Allah from every imperfection) and ‘Al-hamdulillah (praise be to Allah)’ fill that which is between heaven and earth. And the salah (prayer) is a light, and charity is a proof, and patience is illumination, and the Qur’an is a proof either for you or against you. Every person starts his day as a vendor of his soul, either freeing it or causing its ruin.” It was related by Muslim.

Allah has promised to keep The Quran same until the Day of Judgment & challenged humans to create another accurate book like Quran & said if you can't, surrender to your lord (the only way of peace& heaven). Quran is word of god & it has the information of past, present& future. God reveled to Prophet Muhammad whatever god wanted to & kept some information only to god by reveling some & not reveling some. But still Quran is 1 great source of information from God.

Do Muslims worship the Mecca? No Muslims bow towards the direction of mecca & worship only 1 God Allah. While praying in a mosque if Muslims will not have a direction they will end up praying facing or towards each

p5 other .The Quran & Prophet Muhammad taught us to bow towards the direction of mecca while we only pray & worship Allah. And it's also important for the unity of Muslims.

Jesus preached in Aramaic, and parts of the Old Testament and much of the rabbinical literature were written in that language. "El-law" or "El-lawh" in Aramaic means "GOD", while "Eloi" in Aramaic means "My GOD" as Jesus used the word "Eloi" when he was put on

the cross and said "My GOD My GOD why have you forsaken me? (Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachtani?)....(Mark 15:34)"

In Arabic, "GOD" means "Allah", and "My GOD" means "Ilahi" or "Elahi" which is derived from the word "Allah".1. "elahh" is the way the word "hhla" (spelled from right to left as it is Aramaic) is pronounced.

2. The words "Elahh", "hhla (read from right to left)" and "Allah" all have the "h" letter and pronunciation in them.

3- "Allah" in Arabic is pronounced as "Al-lawh" or "Al-lah" depending on the sentence that it is p18 used in. In Arabic, the sound of the word "Allah" could be thicker (Allawh) or thinner (Allah) depending on the sentence.

4- The Aramaic word "hhla (read from right to left)", which is transliterated as "elahh" which means "GOD" is pronounced as "El-aw" as show above.

5- The Aramaic word "hla (read from right to left)", which is transliterated as "elah" which means "oak" is pronounced as "Ay-law" also as shown above.

6- "Allah" in Arabic is pronounced as "Al-lawh" or "Al-lah" depending on the sentence that it is used in. In Arabic, the sound of the word "Allah" could be thicker (Allawh) or thinner (Allah) depending on the sentence.

7- The Hebrew word "Elohim" is the plural of "Elowah", which is derived from the Aramaic word "Alaha", or "Elahh"; the same as the Arabic word "Allah" or "Allawh" in pronunciation.

If we pronounce the words "Allah" in Arabic and "Elahh (pronounced as 'El-aw') in Aramaic, then we would hear almost the same exact word.

1-In the case of "Aalah" or "Aaloh" Aramaic slang pronunciation, it is almost the same as the "Allah" or "Allawh" Arabic slang pronunciation.

2- In the case of "Aalahaa" or "Aalohaa" Aramaic slang pronunciation, it is also almost the same as the "Allaha" or "Allawha" in the Arabic slang pronunciation. "Allah" would be pronounced as "Allaha" or "Allaha" in Arabic if it's used in the middle of the sentence. It can also be pronounced as "Allahi" or "Allahu" or "Allaho" depending on the grammar of the sentence.

3- The Hebrew word "Elohim" is the plural of "Elowah", which is derived from the Aramaic word "Alaha", or "Elahh"; the same as the Arabic word "Allah" or "Allawh" in pronunciation.

"Son of God" means "Servant of God" in Hebrew. Bible agrees with Islam, not with pagan trinity: The sections of this article are: 1-Comparison between Hebrew and Arabic.2- "Son of God" is the same as "Servant of God" in Hebrew! 3- Articles with detailed proofs about "Son of God" means "Servant of God" in Hebrew.4- Conclusion.

1- Comparison between Hebrew and Arabic:In this article, I will prove that the Bible's "Son of GOD" translation is wrong, because it literally means "Servant of GOD" as Islam clearly defines it. I have shown sample evidence from Hebrew below. The following definitions were taken from:

<http://www.thebabycorner.com/pregnancy/babynames/find.php?sex=boy&begin=a>

Word	Hebrew or Arabic	English Translation
Abbott	Hebrew	Father
Abb	Arabic	Father
Abel	Hebrew	Breath or Son of
Abd	Arabic	Servant of or Slave of

Important Note: Since "Abd" means "Servant of" in Arabic, and "Abel" means "Breath of" in Hebrew, then this means "Abel" in Hebrew could also mean "Servant of" or "Creation of", since it literally also means "Breath of".

Word	Hebrew or Arabic	English Translation
Ben	Hebrew	Son of
Bin	Arabic	Son of (as in Osama <u>bin</u> Laden)
Benie Elohim	Hebrew	Sons of GOD
Beni	Arabic	People of (as in Bani Israel, People of Israel)

from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_God

Important Note: Since "Beni" in Arabic means "People of", then this means that "Benie" in Hebrew also means "People of" or "Group of", or "Belongings of", which was falsely translated as "Sons of" throughout the entire Bible!

"In the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

This literature contain a few passages in which the title "son of God" is given to the Messiah (see Enoch, cv. 2; IV Esdras vii. 28-29; xiii. 32, 37, 52; xiv. 9); but the title belongs also to any one whose piety has placed him in a filial relation to God (see Wisdom ii. 13, 16, 18; v. 5, where "the sons of God" are identical with "the saints"; comp. Ecclus. [Sirach] iv. 10).

In Judaism, it is through such personal relations that the individual becomes conscious of God's fatherhood, and gradually in Hellenistic and rabbinical literature "sonship to God" was ascribed first to every Israelite and then to every member of the human race (Abot iii. 15, v. 20; Ber. v. 1; see Abba). In one midrash, the Torah is said to be God's "daughter" (Leviticus Rabbah xx.)"

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_God) **Important Note:** "filial relation to God" means that a person or creation has a special place in GOD Almighty's Sight. Also, "sons of God" being identical with "the saints" means that the term "son of God" is not an accurate one in the sense of being physically or biologically "part of GOD" or "Son of GOD" respectively as the trinitarian Christians falsely claim. Also, "In one midrash, the Torah is said to be God's "daughter", further proves my point that "Son of GOD" today in the English bibles don't mean more than a "Creation of GOD" or "Servant of GOD"; perhaps a very dear or special servant of GOD Almighty, as the Torah was also called "daughter of GOD".

2- "Son of God" is the same as "Servant of God" in Hebrew!"In modern English usage, the Son of God is almost always a reference to Jesus Christ, whom Christianity holds to be the son of the Christian God, eternally begotten of God the Father and coeternal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Human or part-human offspring of deities are very common in other religions and mythologies, however. For example in the Epic of Gilgamesh, one of the earliest recorded legends of humanity, Gilgamesh claimed to be of both human and divine descent. Another well-known son of a god and a human is Hercules.

A great many pantheons also included genealogies in which various gods were descended from other gods, and so the term "son of god" may be applied to many actual deities as well."(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_God) **Important Note:** So as we can see, the "Son of GOD" theory originally comes from pagan Greek origins. And since most of the Bible's New Testament was written in Greek, then it had been without a doubt negatively influenced by such pagan theology, where Jesus being called "Son of GOD" is literally interpreted today as "part of GOD" or the "Creator of the Universe".

"In the Hebrew Bible Israel is both a man (Jacob, the son of Isaac) and the nation that descended from him. Because of the shared name and organic identity, God speaks to the nation as though he were a single person. Israel is, in fact, God's son (Exod 4:22 — *beni vechori yisrael*; Deut 14:1 — *banim atem l'Adonai*; Jer 31:9 — *ki hayiti le'yisrael le'av*; Hosea 11:1 — *mimitzrayim qarati livni*). Israel's Father nurtures him to grow up and become a worshiping servant (Exod 4:23 — "Let my son go that he may serve me")."(<http://www.hebrew-streams.org/works/hebrew/eved-adonai.html>)

Important Note: Here we see when Israel became GOD Almighty's "son", he reached the point of being GOD Almighty's "servant". This means that "son of GOD" is nothing but a "Servant of GOD" as clearly defined in Islam. It doesn't at all mean that the individual is part of GOD Almighty, or he is GOD the Father Himself.

This is further proven in this quote:

"The Inner Son Rescues His People

Read together, these texts make clear that the Plan (etzah) is set in God's mind. He will use the anointed one

p7 — and his circle of faithful-to-God disciples — as his agent for bringing rebellious Israel back to his sonship calling.

**YHVH formed me from the womb to be His Servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
in order that Israel might be gathered to Him.
It is too small a thing that you should be
my Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob,
and to restore the preserved ones [netzurim] of Israel . . . (Isa 49:5, 6)**

It's worth noting that the apostles Paul and Barnabas quoted this passage in reference to themselves, as being members of the Messiah's Remnant Israel (Acts 13:46-48; cf. Luke 2:32).

Thus, within the writings of Isaiah we observe the tensions, paradoxes, and hopes for fixing what is broken — both within God's servant people and in the creation as a whole. To accomplish this there are two who serve the Lord, two with the title "Eved." "

(<http://www.hebrew-streams.org/works/hebrew/eved-adonai.html>)

Important Note: Again, we see that the Son of GOD's main responsibility is to Serve GOD Almighty and to Worship Him alone. So a Son of GOD is basically a Servant of GOD. Also, Jesus being called "Son of GOD" is also no different. Him being the "Son of GOD" means he is a Servant of GOD Almighty, or Abdallah, since "Abd" means "Servant of" and "Allah" means "GOD" or "The Supreme GOD Almighty above all gods".

3- Articles with detailed proofs about "Son of God" means "Servant of God":

Below are a list of articles that clearly prove from Hebrew resources that "Son of God" also means "Servant of God".

Article #1:

.(Emphasis below is mine) Is Jesus "God's Son" or "God's Servant?" Do you see a difference between these two Bible versions?

King James Version

Acts 3:25 - Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

Acts 3:26 - Unto you first God, having raised up **his Son Jesus**, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

New King James Version

Acts 3:25 - You are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Acts 3:26 - To you first, God, having raised up **His Servant Jesus**, sent Him to bless you, in turning every one of you away from his iniquities.

In the KJV, we find that Jesus is God's Son. In the NKJV, we find that He is God's servant. These are clearly not the same! The Greek word found in the text here is "pais". It can be used in Greek for either "son" or "servant." So which one is correct here? The solution is simple: look at the context in which it is used. In English, we have many words that can have more than one meaning. If a translator, going from English to another language, came across the word "bear," he would have a choice of meanings. But it wouldn't take rocket science to figure out which one to use. If the passage described a man with a heavy burden, the translator would understand that the man is going to "bear," or "carry" the burden. If, on the other hand, the passage described a hairy beast climbing a tree, the translator would understand the correct meaning here applies to a forest-dwelling animal that will eat nearly anything it finds. It's not really very hard.

Now look at the Bible passage above. What is being discussed?

"children of the prophets"

"covenant which God made with our fathers"

"in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

It's clear, isn't it? The passage is talking about "children," and "fathers" and "seed." The word "pais" means "son." But the New King James translators chose "servant." Why? They were not alone. The New

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World Translation, created by the Jehovah's Witnesses who deny the deity of Jesus, translated this word "servant" also. So do the NIV, ASV, NASB and other modern Bible translations. Could it be that these modern translators disagree that "pais" can be translated "son?" No, the NKJV committee translates this very word as "boy," "child" or "son" in Matthew 2:16; 17:18; 21:15; Luke 2:43; 9:42; and John 4:51. Yet they refused to translate the word as "son" in this powerful sermon where Peter presents Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. One has to ask, why were these translators so determined to deny the deity of Jesus in this passage? Is this a Bible you can trust with your eternal destiny?

Article #2

1.2.3.15 Jesus is God's servant All of mankind are the servants of God. If a man were to own another man then that man would be his servant. Obviously this servant would be held in a lower regard than this man's own children (or himself).

We do not usually find people telling their sons (or themselves): *"come here my servant,"* or *"Go over there my servant."* Let us compare this with what God has to say about Jesus (pbuh):

Matthew 12:18: *"Behold my servant, whom I have chosen."*

Acts 3:13(RSV): *"The God of Abraham, and of Isaac,.... hath glorified his servant Jesus."*

Acts 4:27(RSV): *"For of a truth against thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou hast anointed...."*

The Actual Greek word used is "pais" or "paida" which mean; "servant, child, son, manservant." Some translations of the Bible, such as the popular King James Version, have translated this word as "Son" when it is attributed to Jesus (pbuh) and "servant" for most everyone else, while more recent translations of the Bible such as the Revised Standard Version (RSV) now honestly translate it as "servant." As we shall see in later chapters, the RSV was compiled by thirty two Biblical scholars of the highest eminence, backed by 50 cooperating Christian denominations from the "most" ancient Biblical manuscripts available to them today. Chances are that no matter what your church or denomination you are able to name, that church took part in the correction of the King James Version of the Bible which resulted in the RSV.

The exact same word "pais" is attributed to Jacob (Israel) in Luke 1:54 and translated as "servant":

"He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;." It is also applied to King David in Luke 1:69, and once again, it is translated as "servant":

"....the house of his servant David;" (also see Acts 4:25).

However, when it is applied to Jesus (e.g. Acts 3:13, Acts 4:27), NOW it is translated as "Son." (notice that it is not only translated as "son" but as "Son".) Why the double standard? Why the dishonest translation techniques?

"And verily, among them is a party who twist their tongues with the Scripture that you might think that it is from the Scripture but it is not from the Scripture; and they say, 'It is from Allah' but it is not from Allah; and they speak a lie against Allah while [well] they know it!" The noble Qur'an, A'al-Umran(3):78

"The Messiah will never scorn to be a servant of Allah, nor will the favored angels. Whosoever scorns His service and is proud, all such will He assemble unto Him; Then as for those who believed and did good works, unto them will he pay their wages in full and shall increase them from His bounty. [But] as for those who were scornful and proud, He shall punish them with a painful torment, nor will they find for themselves other than Allah any ally or champion" The noble Qur'an, Al-Nissa(4):172-174

4- Conclusion: As we've seen above, in Hebrew, "Son of God" can also be translated as "Servant of God", which literally means "Abdallah" in Arabic. Abd = Servant, and Allah = Allah, or the Supreme GOD Almighty that is above all gods. So, Jesus being called "Son of God" does not mean anything about him being part of GOD or GOD Almighty Himself. It simply means "Servant of God" since Jesus existed among Jews and preached the Gospel to them. Allah Almighty said: "And they say: "(God) Most Gracious has begotten offspring." Glory to Him! they are (but) servants raised to honour. (The Noble Quran, 21:26)"

Information arranged and organized by Faisal Fahim

Some hadiths (teachings of prophet Muhammad) (pbuh) Aisha reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, say, "Gabriel continued to advise me to treat neighbors well until I thought he would make them my heirs." Source: Sahih Muslim 2624 Grade: Sahih (authentic) according to Imam Muslim

Abu Musa reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "The honest Muslim trustee who carries out the orders of those who trusted him and who pays in full with a good heart to the right person is regarded as one of the two who gave charity." Source: Sahih Bukhari 1371, Sahih Muslim [...] Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said,

"There is no justification for envy except in two cases. First, a man whom Allah has given the Quran and he recites it during the night and day, so someone says: If I were to be given like this, I would do as he is doing. And second, a man whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in justice, so someone says: If I were to be given like this, I would do as he is doing." Source: Sahih Bukhari 6805 Grade: Sahih (authentic) according to Al-Bukhari

Hadith on Zakat: The command to give 2.5% of surplus wealth as alms and charity

Abu Amina Elias | April 5, 2013 Ali ibn Abu Talib reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "If you have two hundred coins and a year has passed, then five coins is due for alms; and you will owe nothing until you own twenty coins, but when you own twenty coins and a year has passed, then half of a coin is due for alms and whatever exceeds that should be calculated likewise." Source: Sunan Abu Dawud 1572 Grade: Hasan (fair) according to Abu Dawud (due to his silence) Abu Dharr reported: My dear friend the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, enjoined upon me three deeds, "Listen to and obey the ruler even if a slave is appointed over you. When you make soup, put some extra water in it and look to the people in the neighboring house and give them a reasonable portion of it, and pray your prayers on time, for if you find the Imam praying then pray with him and your prayer will be safeguarded, otherwise it will be voluntary for you." Source: Musnad Ahmad 20918 Grade: Sahih (authentic) according to Al-Albani

Juwairiya reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, came out from her apartment as she was performing the dawn prayer. He returned in the forenoon and found her sitting there. The Prophet said, "Are you in the same position as I left you?" She said yes. The Prophet said, "I recited four words three times after I left you. If these are to be weighed against all you have recited since the morning, these words will be heavier. They are: Glory and praise to Allah as many as the numbers of His creation, in according with His pleasure, as the weight of the Throne, and as the ink for recording His words." Source: Sahih Muslim 2726 Grade: Sahih (authentic) according to Imam Muslim Ubadah ibn As-Samit reported: We pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, pledging to listen and obey in hardship and in ease, in pleasure and displeasure even if someone is wrongly favored over us, and pledging not to dispute the rule of those in authority and that we should speak the truth wherever we are and not to fear those who blame us regarding Allah. Source: Sahih Muslim 1709 Grade: Sahih (authentic) according to Imam Muslim

Al-Qurtubi reported: Some scholars gave permission to initiate greetings of peace with the unbelievers. It was said to Sufyan bin Uyainah, "Do you give permission to greet an unbeliever with peace?" Sufyan said, "Yes, for Allah the Exalted said: Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you in religion nor expel you from your homes that you be righteous and fair to them. Verily, Allah loves those who are just." (60:8) Sufyan added, "Allah said: There has come to you the best example in Abraham, (60:4) and Abraham said to his father: Peace be upon you." (19:47) Source: Tafseer Al-Qurtubi, verse 19:41

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported: He stood upon a platform and he grabbed his tongue and he said, "O tongue! Speak goodness and be rewarded, or remain silent and be safe before you are regretful." Then he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, say, "Most of the sins of the children of Adam are on their tongues." [At-Tabarani, Mu'jam Al-Kabeer, Number 10300, Sahih]

Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said three times, "May Allah have mercy on a person who spoke rightly and was rewarded, or who was silent and remained safe." Source: Shu'b Al-Iman Al-Bayhaqi 4579

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "The basis of reasoning, after faith in Allah, is loving kindness toward the people." Source: At-Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat, Number 6067

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him not harm his neighbor. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honor his guest. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak goodness or remain silent." Source: Sahih Muslim 47

Ibn Mas'ud reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "During the night journey, I met with Abraham, Moses, and Jesus and they were discussing the matter of the Hour. Their matter was referred to Abraham, who said, "I have no knowledge about it." So the matter was referred to

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Moses, who said, "I have no knowledge about it." So the matter was referred to Jesus, who said, "As for the conditions of the Hour, no one knows them but Allah. My Lord the Exalted has entrusted me that the False Messiah will appear and I will have with me two rods. When he sees me, he will melt away just as lead is melted in fire. Allah will destroy him to the point that the rock and the tree will say: O Muslims, beneath me is an unbeliever, so come slay him. Thus, Allah will destroy them and the people will return to their lands and their countries. When that happens, the nations of Gog and Magog will appear, eating and drinking everything in their lands. They will not come upon anything but that they will devour it and they will not pass by any water but that they will consume it. The people will complain to me about them, so I will supplicate to Allah and He will destroy them until their stench fills the earth. Then Allah will send rain which will wash their bodies into the sea. My Lord the Exalted has entrusted me that when all of this happens, the Hour is indeed near just as a women is ready to give birth; her family does not know when she will give birth but it could be any day or night." [Musnad Ahmad, Number 3546, Sahih]

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "By Allah, the son of Mary will descend as a just ruler. He will abolish the cross, kill the swine, and annul the tribute, but he will leave the she-camel such that no one collects from it. He will cause rancor, hatred, and envy to disappear, and he will call people to give their wealth in charity but no one will need it." Source: Sahih Muslim 155

Prophet said, "By Allah, you must enjoin good and forbid evil and seize the hand of the oppressor and make him follow the truth and restrict him to what is just." Source: Sunan Abu Dawud 4336

"God is Kind and likes kindness in all things." Reporter: Hadhrat Ayesah (r) Source: Bukhari/Muslim (reported in Riyadhus Saleheen, #633); Sunan Ibn Majah, #3684 The people will be resurrected

(and judged) according to their intentions." Reporter: Hadhrat Aishah (r) Source: Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 3, Book of Fasting, Chapter 6, p. 69

"The best among you are those

who have the best manners and character." Reporter: Hadhrat Abdullah ibn Amr (r) Source: Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 8: #56b

"A person who goes in search of knowledge, he is in the path of God and he remains so till he returns." Reporter: Hadhrat Anas (r) Source: Sunan at-Tirmizi, Vol. 4, #2656

"Hell lies hidden behind evil (worldly desires) and paradise is screened behind hard labor." Reporter: Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (r) Source: Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, #494

"Paradise is closer to you than your shoelace, and so is the (Hell) Fire." Reporter: Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ud Source: Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, #495

"The world is prison for the believers and paradise for the disbelievers." Reporter: Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (r) Source: Sahih Muslim, Vol. 4, #7058

"To spend one morning or evening in the cause of God is better than the world and whatever is in the world." Reporter: Hadhrat Anas bin Malik Source: Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, #50

PART 2

Allah Quran And Science

P1

BY MR.FAISAL FAHIM

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ABOUT FAISAL FAHIM: FAISAL WAS BORN IN BANGLADESH. HE SPENT HIS CHILDHOOD WITH HIS GRANDPARENTS IN BANGLADESH & HE SAW THEM PRAYING 5 TIMES A DAY. HE CAME TO AMERICA AT A YOUNG AGE AND HE IS AN AMERICAN BANGLADESHI MUSLIM.IN AMERICA HE LIVED WITH HIS PARENTS.HE WENT TO SCHOOLS IN NY. HE WENT TO VISIT BANGLADESH IN 2009 & HE SAW SOME VIDEOS OF DR.ZAKIR NAIK ON TV. THE VIDEOS WERE ABOUT SPREADING THE KNOWLEDGE OF ISLAM WITH MUSLIMS AND NONMUSLIMS.HE WAS INSPIRED BY DR.ZAKIR NAIK.HE LOVES ISLAM & BELIEVES ISLAM IS A RELIGION OF PEACE & MERCY.SO HE LIKES TO SPREAD THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM TO NONMUSLIMS AND MUSLIMS.

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "The basis of reasoning, after faith in Allah, is loving kindness toward the people."Source: At-Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat, Number 6067

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him not harm his neighbor. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honor his guest. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak goodness or remain silent."Source: Sahih Muslim 47

Surat Al-'Ikhlaṣ (The Sincerity)

Say, "He is Allah, The Only One,

"Allah-us-Samad (The Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, He neither eats nor drinks).

"He begets not, nor was He begotten;

And to Him none could be co-equal or comparable unto Him."

Introduction :Surah Al-Fatiha (The Opening) al Quran)In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,The Beneficent, the Merciful.Owner of the Day of Judgment,Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help.Guide us on the straight path,

The path of those whom Thou hast favored;Not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray.

(1 : 1-7)

On the authority of Abu Malik al-Harith bin Asim al-Asharee (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Purity is half of iman (faith). 'Al-hamdu lillah (praise be to Allah)' fills the scales, and 'subhan-Allah (how far is Allah from every imperfection) and 'Al-hamdulillah (praise be to Allah)' fill that which is between heaven and earth. And the salah (prayer) is a light, and charity is a proof, and patience is illumination, and the Qur'an is a proof either for you or against you. Every person starts his day as a vendor of his soul, either freeing it or causing its ruin." It was related by Muslim.

Errors of Christianity and Judaism (See Genesis 1: 1 - 31) Scientists say that the Earth's surface took millions of years to cool down and became suitable for living. Genesis says that the water

Appeared on earth on its first day, then the appearance of the plants

On its third, and the animals on the fourth and the fifth days.

The biblical order of the appearance of the creations contradicts the findings of geologic history.The presence of water on the face of the earth on the first day contradicts the scientific theory that the earth and the universe were gas at the beginning of creation. In addition, the plants cannot appear before the existence of the sun, and the marine animals and birds were not before wild animals.

Scientifically, saying that the creation of the earth was before the

P2 creation of the sun and the stars (on the fourth day) is wrong. Moreover, the appearance of the night and the day for three days, without the sun is surprising!

In addition, saying that the appearance of plants was three days before man is wrong. Scientific discoveries tell us that the presence of vegetations were millions of years before the presence of man.

Torah claims that the earth has pillars, has corners, and it is flat, approving the scientific mainstream during the time of the writing. It says, "The sun also arises, and the sun goes down, and haste to its place where it arises." (Ecclesiastes 1: 5) The writer did not know neither that the earth is spherical, nor that it spins on its axis to create the sunrise and sunset.

The author of that verse was not Allah (S.W.) the Omniscient, who says, "He created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions): He makes the Night overlap the Day, and the Day overlap the Night: He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His law)" (Holy Quran, Surah 39, Az-Zumar – 5)

Describing Allah (S.W.), the Torah says that He is "That shaketh the earth out of its place, And the pillars thereof tremble".

(Job 9: 6) The holy books' writers confirmed this misconception. They claimed that Allah (S.W.) said to Job, "Where were you when I put the earth on its base? Say, if you have knowledge. By whom were its measures fixed? Say, if you have wisdom; or by whom was the line stretched out over it? On what were its pillars based, or who laid its corner-stone" (Job 38: 4-6), and the Book of Samuel says. "For the pillars of the earth are Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them." (1Samuel 2: 8).

The New Testament confirms this naive and wrong perception of the earth; it is flat, with pillars, and with four corners, in some verses, which I will mention them in their place of this series.

Ecclesiastes speaks about the water cycle on earth and why the sea would not be full, although much water is poured into it from rivers. It mentions that the seawater goes back again to the springs of the rivers, so the sea would not be full. It says, "All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea doth not overflow: unto the place from whence the rivers come, they return, to flow again ". (Ecclesiastes 1: 7)

Finally, the Torah ratifies that humans have the ability of bringing the souls of the dead, and tells that this actually happened. The sorcerer was able to bring Prophet Samuel's spirit to King Saul, and explained the talk between them. (See 1Samuel 28: 3-20) This is close to witchcraft and myth more than anything else.

These errors and others testify that this book is not the word of Allah

The word of Allah (S.W.) does not err, nor teach people lies or error And if ye are in doubt As to what We have revealed From time to time to Our Servant, then produce a Soorah Like thereunto; And call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah, If your (doubts) are true. But if ye cannot – And of a surety you cannot. then fear the Fire Whose fuel is Men and Stones – Which is prepared for those Who reject Faith." [Al-Qur'aan 2:23-24] Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth Were joined together (as one Unit of Creation), before we clove them asunder?" [Al-Qur'aan 21:30]

p3 The striking congruence between the Qur'aanic verse and the 'Big Bang' is inescapable! Allah mentions big bang in Quran! Scientists say that before the galaxies in the universe were formed, celestial

matter was initially in the form of gaseous matter "Moreover He Comprehended In His design the sky, And it had been smoke: He said to it And to the earth: 'Come ye together, Willingly or unwillingly They said:We do -Quran41:11

THE QURAN ISNT A BOOK OF SCIENCE IT'S A BOOK OF SIGNS FROM GOD!

The Sun and Moon.

Whereas the Bible talks of the sun and the moon as two lights differing only in size, the Qur'an distinguishes between them by the use of different terms: light (noor) for the moon, and lamp (siraa) for the sun.

"Did you see how Allah created seven heavens, one above the other, and made in them the moon a light and the sun a lamp?" Qur'an, 78:12-13

The moon is an inert body which reflects light, whereas the sun is a celestial body in a state of permanent combustion producing both light and heat.

THE SUN ROTATES"It is He Who created The Night and the Day, And the sun and the moon: All (the celestial bodies) Swim along, each in its Rounded course." [Al-Qur'aan 21:33]

"It is not permitted To the Sun to catch up The Moon, nor can The Night outstrip the Day: Each (just) swims along In (its own) orbit (According to Law)." [Al-Qur'aan 36:40]

THE SUN WILL EXTINGUISH AFTER A CERTAIN PERIOD"And the Sun Runs its course For a period determined For it; that is The decree of (Him) The exalted in Might, The All-Knowing." [Al-Qur'aan 36:38]

THE EXISTENCE OF SUBATOMIC PARTICLES"The Unbelievers say, 'Never to us will come The Hour': say, 'Nay! But most surely, By my Lord, it will come Upon you – by Him Who knows the unseen – From Whom is not hidden The least little atom In the Heavens or on earth: Nor is there anything less Than that, or greater, but Is in the Record Perspicuous.'" [Al-Qur'aan 34:3]

BARRIER BETWEEN SWEET AND SALT WATERS"He has let free the two bodies Of flowing water, Meeting together: Between them is a Barrier Which they do not transgress." [Al-Qur'aan 55:19-20]

"It is He Who has Let

free the two bodies Of flowing water: One palatable and sweet, And the other salty and bitter; Yet has He Made a barrier between them, And a partition that is forbidden To be passed." [Al-Qur'aan 25:53]

FRUITS CREATED IN PAIRS, MALE AND FEMALE

"And fruit Of every kind He made In pairs, two and two." [Al-Qur'aan 13:3]

EVERYTHING MADE IN PAIRS"Glory to Allah, Who created In pairs all things that The earth produces, as well as Their own (human) kind And (other) things of which They have no knowledge." [Al-Qur'aan 36:36]

FOETUS PROTECTED BY THREE VEILS OF DARKNESS

"He makes you, In the wombs of your mothers, In stages, one after another, In three veils of darkness." [Al-Qur'aan 39:6]

According to Prof. Keith Moore these three veils of darkness in the Qur'aan refer to:

- (i) anterior abdominal wall of the mother
- (ii) the uterine wall
- (iii) the amnio-chorionic membrane.

EMBRYONIC STAGES

"Man We did create From a quintessence (of clay); Then We placed him As (a drop of) sperm In a place of rest, firmly fixed; Then We made the

P4 sperm into a clot of congealed blood; Then of that clot We made a (foetus) lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, The Best to create!" [Al-Qur'aan 23:12-14]

"Do not the Unbelievers see That the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one Unit of Creation), before We clove them asunder?" [Al-Qur'aan 21:30]

The striking congruence between the Qur'aanic verse and the 'Big Bang' is inescapable! How could a book, which first appeared in the deserts of Arabia 1400 years ago, contain this profound scientific truth?

THERE WAS AN INITIAL GASEOUS MASS BEFORE THE CREATION OF GALAXIES

Scientists say that before the galaxies in the universe were formed, celestial matter was initially in the form of gaseous matter. In short, huge gaseous matter or clouds were present before the formation of the galaxies. To describe initial celestial matter, the word 'smoke' is more appropriate than gas. The following Qur'aanic verse refers to this state of the universe by the word *dhukhan* which means smoke.

"Moreover, He comprehended in His design the sky, And it had been (as) smoke: He said to it And to the earth: 'Come ye together, willingly' The Qur'aan and Modern Science: Compatible or Incompatible? or unwillingly.' They said: 'We do come (Together), in willing obedience.'" [Al-Qur'aan 41:11]

Again, this fact is a corollary to the 'Big Bang' and was not known to the

Arabs during the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). What then, could have been the source of this knowledge?

It is mentioned in the Quran 1400 years ago even before scientists found the genetic similarities of monkeys, apes & humans. What scientists have found is true but their opinion of the theory of evolution is wrong. Quran is word of God & it has the information of past, present & future. God revealed to Prophet Muhammad whatever God wanted to & kept some information only to God by revealing some & not revealing some. But still Quran is 1 great source of information from God. Because of their constant defiance and blasphemy of God Almighty's Divine and Holy Words, not all Jews but some Jews were transformed into swines and apes during Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) times: "Say: Shall I point out to you something much worse than this, (as judged) by the treatment it received from God? those who incurred the curse of God and His wrath, those of whom some He transformed into apes and swine, those who worshipped evil;- these are (many times) worse in rank, and far more astray from the even path!" The Noble Quran, 5:60

Scientists don't know for sure. Perhaps the most popular theory says that, shortly after the Earth formed, millions of asteroids and comets, saturated in water, slammed into the planet, releasing their payloads to form Earth's oceans. Scientists are working hard to understand more about what our planet was like billions of years ago, and each new piece of information moves us closer to understanding how Earth's oceans, lakes and rivers came to exist. But the Quran already has the answer because the Quran is more superior than science & it's the only 100% true book of God's words. Thenceforth were your hearts hardened: They became like a rock and even worse in hardness. For among rocks there are some from which rivers gush forth; others there are which when split asunder send forth water; and others which sink for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unmindful of what ye do. 2:74 al-Baqarah Verse: 74 AL-QURAN

Quran is not a copy of anything & there is no evidence to say such. Statements in Quran are against Torah & Bible. Torah & Bible has so many errors. & according to science 80% of Quran matches with science & other 20% of Quran science doesn't have answers maybe it will take couple of hundred years to find out for science. According to historians original Bible doesn't exist anymore. According to Islam Torah & Bible were books of Allah but humans have destroyed their originality. So Quran is the last & final word of God Allah & Muhammad is the last & final messenger of Allah. Quran is not copy of anything and its 100% word of God in Islam. According to science Torah & Bibles statements have errors & Quran's statements are accurate & word of God is accurate.

P5 To say that there is no god or there is they both should be based on facts and evidences. Just like stating Mr.X doesn't exist just because of lack of evidence. It doesn't prove that he doesn't exist. So if my neighbor Mr.X goes missing and police finds no evidence about him we can't just say he never existed! Humans have been part of this world about 6 million years according to some scientists. 1 million years ago there was no evidence for germs but they did exist! Still we are not sure whether aliens exist or not. The universe is like an ocean and the world is like a dust so what science has discovered it is not enough to make a scientific 100% proven statement that there is no god at all and science will never find god. If god exists science will be advanced enough 1 day to discover its mystery and it might take billions of years of research. But until then the claim of that there is no god is equally a blind faith as claiming that there is god for sure! So the best statement a logical person or a scientist could make is this that we don't know yet. Because science has yet to find much more than what we have now.

Even if 1 says the universe came from nothing that will contradict science because some scientists claim nothing comes from nothing! But some say something can come from nothing and in that case I can say god was created from nothing or is uncreated just like some claim the universe came from nothing but that contradicts the claim that nothing comes from nothing! So my point is sometimes even science can contradict science and be wrong rarely but it's possible because nothing is impossible. And claiming that god exists doesn't limit the possibilities but claiming it does not limit its possibilities. Just like $4+3=7$ but $4 \times 3=12$ so both have possibilities and we can't just claim or deny something without having the proper knowledge and evidence of it. There is no scientific statement made by a scientist who shows whether god exists or not! So I can say I don't know is the best answer. but if I'm a Muslim or Christian I can also say I have faith in god but atheists claim atheism isn't a religion so an atheist can't say I have faith that there is no god! so yes I will state that I believe in my religion which tells me god exists so I have faith and I am a believer but I am not claiming I have the evidence that I can prove the world that Allah exists. I don't have a video record of god & if you want that type of evidence! But guess what god has no image so I can't show god to anyone period. Besides we are supposed to believe in the unseen and that's where the faith/believe plays its role! But atheists don't have faith in any god or on religion. According to Islam we will never see god in this life and god is in heaven not in you or me or anywhere else but up in heaven only! Yes I believe in hell and heaven and it's my choice just like you exercise yours by not having faith and it's ok with me! But I disagree that atheists have an open mind since the basic system of atheism is based on denying others faiths no matter what they say and it's not that the scriptures don't have any scientific statements but because atheists simply don't want to believe! And it's a fact that atheists deny the facts found in religious scriptures just to stick to their views which aren't based on evidence but on blind faith. And they do this not because there is no evidence of scientific statements in the scriptures but because they don't want to believe period!

The Quran isn't a book of science but it's a book of signs from god! Quran is not copy of anything and its 100% word of god in Islam. According to science Torah & Bibles statements have errors & Quran's statements are accurate & word of god is accurate.

God definition By Faisal: God does not born or die. Who has no beginning or end. Does not need to become human, animal or insect to understand his creation. He is the creator who knows what he has created. He is the most wise. So, he knows everything. He feeds everyone, but he doesn't need to eat or sleep or use toilet. True God is the creator who is not part of the creation. So, he has no father, mother, wife or children. He's above all & unique. There's none like him & he's only one, who has no partner & no gender. So, he's the creator of all creation & not part of his or any creation. That is the definition of one true God in Islam which is Allah. Allah has created the humans in a pair of male & female to worship him & in different colors, languages, countries to respect & recognize each other. TV, watch, computer, phone everything has a purpose. Purpose of us is not just only to eat, poo, have sex & sleep. Purpose of life is to obey & worship the creator because humans are the most superior of creation & our purpose is to serve god by praising & praying. No 1 is superior whether you are black or white, Arab or non Arab, male or female. For god everyone is equal. Islam is the only religion that is against racism. Allah is the most just & God judges you by your heart only not by your looks. Islam is an accurate, just & peaceful religion of 1 god creator Lord Allah.

In Quran, It says "If you kill one human being it's as if you have killed the entire of humanity. And if you save one human being. It's as you saved the entire

p6 of humanity". So, for killing you go to hell, for saving you go to heaven. There was no suicide bombers in the time of prophet Mohammad. Islam believes God created the first humans were Adam & eve without any father & mother. The devil made them eat a fruit that was told by God to not to eat.

And they got poo, but, they were not allowed to poo in heaven. You can eat everything in heaven & you wont get poo & it's a unholy thing you get it when you eat foods on earth & the 1forbidden fruit that was in heaven. So, as punishment God sent them to earth. Adam&Eve were married &having sex for married couples is not sin in islam. All humans are children of Adam & eve. In Islam from Adam to Moses, to Jesus to Mohammad God sent all of them as messengers prophets & humans to spread the true religion. Because God created Adam & Eve without any father & mother. It means true creator can create everything in any way he wants to, for example If he says something to happen It'll just happen. The same way he made Adam & Eve without being their father & mother plus also having no father & mother. He has the wisdom & power of over everything. Similarity of creating Adam a slight differently he created prophet Jesus as one of the mightiest messengers of God with having just mother without any father. Because God can do anything God can create humans without father & mother as well as having a mother but no father. That's the true miracle & it can only be done by one true creator. And that's the believe of Islam that the true God is Allah who has no partner, no parents, no children, no wife, doesn't born or die, has no image because there's none like him, does not eat but feeds everyone & does not sleep. In Islam the name of prophet Jesus is Isa. And Jesus/Isa did everything with the power of Allah (God). God gave him the power to do it. Who created Jesus as a messenger of God. Similarly he created Adam, Moses, Abraham, Noah, Isa as Jesus, Mohammad as messengers of peace & Islam towards humanity. And God can't be part of creation. If it's part of creation then it's not the creator or God or Allah. Even in Bible it says Jesus put his head on the floor as Muslims put their head on the floor for praying. 80% of Quran matches with Science & other 20% of Quran the Science does not have the answers because they haven't discovered or improved that much. For example Quran talks

about heaven, hell, & there are aliens. Science has no answer for everything but Quran has all the answers since last 1400 years even when Science had no answers. In the Bible it talks about Prophet Noah & the story goes something like this that the Prophet received a message from God that there would be a flood all over the world. So, he built a big boat & he took some people & a pair of every animals. According to Science there was not a flood which happened all over the world but it happened

p7 in a particular part of earth. Quran also tells it

happened in a particular part of the world. Quran also talks about humans are partly formed from father & partly formed from mother. And today Science agrees with it. So, if some one reads Quran & do a scientific research it'll help to understand what the truth is & what is fiction. Bible says, the world is flat & circle. Scientifically it's not true. A coin is also flat & circle. Quran tells the original shape of earth. Science can't prove any error in Quran but tells errors on Bible. Don't believe it! Do your own research & believe what's logical. Don't ask people but do your own research so, you can believe in true God the creator of all creation but not a creation. Islam also teaches black cumin cures so many diseases without any side effects. The ultimate goal of saitan (Devil) is to take humans towards hell & shirk. Shirk means to associate or include someone with God. True God has no partner, can't compare him with any creation because he has created the creation, how can he be part of what he created? Remember true religion should have all the answers Of humanity & should not have any missing links. Islam believes Quran is 100% words of one creator God Allah. People might think there are 2 types of Muslims Shia & Sunni. But they both have same book Quran. And in Quran there is no Sunni or Shia. Islam is one religion & Quran is the

only one book Of God in Islam. The followers of Islam & Quran are called Muslims. No Muslim is a Muslim unless he beliefs Adam, Moses, Abraham, Jesus, Noah, Mohammad were all messengers of one God Allah. No Muslim is a good Muslim unless he's a good human being. Islam teaches to live peacefully with people of every religion, race, color, language & nationalities. So we should understand, respect& live peacefully with each other. In the last 100 years to now Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. That's why some governments & Medias create lies & misconceptions about Islam. Remember, true religion is the one that answers all the questions of humanity. Science can't prove any error in Quran. And true book of God can't have any errors. Muslims believe Torah & Bible were books of God but they have been changed by humans. So, Quran is the last & final book of God. Quran is only one book but you can find it in all languages. Any one who believes in God should do research on Science, Quran & Bible. Fact is stranger then fiction. The book of God should have all the answers for humanity with no errors & word of God can't have errors!

P8

Did Islam Exist Before Muhammad (Peace & Blessings Be Upon Him)?

God does not born or die he is forever. Jesus, Moses, Mohammad & all other people of Bible, Quran & Torah were great messengers prophets of god not sons of god they were created by 1 true god, creator, Allah. So any creation can't be the 1 creator Allah. So they were messengers, prophets of god. How can creator be part of what he has created Himself!!! So he is not part of any creation again he is not a creation & has no partners no father ,mother, daughter ,son, brother, sister ,wife & no gender simply unique beyond comparable & 1 & 1 only. From Adam to Jesus god sent his messages for every generation or period of time but it was always destroyed by mankind & the devils conspiracy to take mankind towards hell. Because all previous books were massed up by humans Allah sent his last messenger not son or god, but messenger Mohammad & sent him Quran & it's messages to guide humans towards Allah & heaven. Allah has promised to Keep Quran same until the Day of Judgment & challenged humans to create another accurate book like Quran & said if you can't then surrender to your lord (the only way of peace&heaven). Majority of things science has discovered until now 80% of Quran had all those undiscovered answers from the last 1400years when science didn't have any answers. The other 20% answer was & is in Quran. Maybe it will take science another 1400years to find it. All 100% answers are in Quran. Science can't prove a single verse of Quran wrong. If you do a research on Quran, bible and science you will find facts. Facts are stranger than fiction. In the bible it says Jesus bowed his head on floor just like Muslims bow their head on floor while praying .You should do research on bible, Quran & science if you believe in god so you can find facts on Islam. If I teach a parrot a message & send it to someone & parrot tells the message to that person and leaves & that person starts saying that parrot is my son that would make no sense, because that was my messenger not son. Jesus was taken up alive & after that people started calling him son of god. He came to establish Islam & was a messenger of 1 god. Christianity started after Jesus was gone, Jesus will comeback & die as a human & Muslim. Quran is the only accurate 100% words of god & word of god can't have errors then it would not be word of god & according to science bibles & Torahs has many errors but they can't prove a verse in Quran wrong. Muslims believe there is no god but Allah & Prophet Mohammad is the last & final prophet & messenger of Allah.

Conclusion

He said: "I am indeed a servant of God: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet; 019.031 "And He hath made me blessed wheresoever I be, and hath enjoined on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live; 019.032 "(He) hath made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable; 019.033 "So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)"! 019.034 Such (was) Jesus the son of Mary: (it is) a statement of truth, about which they (vainly) dispute. 019.035 It is not befitting to (the majesty of) God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! when He determines a matter, He only says to it, "Be", and it is. Al-Quran.

God forbids you not, with regards to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them; for God loveth those who are just (Qur'an, 60:8)

Adam, Abraham ,Noah, Moses ,Jesus , Muhammad were all messengers & prophets of 1 God Allah so Islam is the 1st religion & it's the last religion because God is Allah & God is forever so is God's religion which is only Islam & it is also forever. Finally Islam always existed even before Adam, Abraham ,Noah, Moses ,Jesus & Muhammad because it's the only true religion from God Allah.

Question: Does Quran mention that Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet? Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but [he is] the messenger of God and seal(last,finish,end,final) of the prophets and God has the knowledge of everything. (Quran 33:40)

PART3

1

Islam and Terrorism

Often, the religion of Islam is held responsible for the acts of a fringe minority among Muslims.

Could it be possible that Islam, whose light ended the Dark Ages in Europe, now propound the advent of an age of terror? Could a faith that has over 1.2 billion followers the world over, and over 7 million in America, actually advocate the killing and maiming of innocent people? Could Islam, whose name itself stands for “peace” and “submission to God”, encourage its adherents to work for death and destruction?

For too long, have we relied on stereotypical images in the news media and in Hollywood films, for answers to these pertinent questions. It is time now to look at the sources of Islam, and its history, to determine whether Islam does indeed advocate violence.

Sanctity of human life

The Glorious Qur'an says:

“...take not life, which God hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law: thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom.” [Al-Qur'an 6:151]

Islam considers all life forms as sacred. However, the sanctity of human life is accorded a special place. The first and the foremost basic right of a human being is the right to live. The Glorious Qur'an says:

“...if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.” [Al-Qur'an 5:32]

Such is the value of a single human life, that the Qur'an equates the taking of even one human life unjustly, with killing all of humanity. Thus, the Qur'an prohibits homicide in clear terms. The taking of a criminal's life by the state in order to administer justice is required to uphold the rule of law, and the peace and security of the society. Only a proper and competent court can decide whether an individual has forfeited his right to life by disregarding the right to life and peace of other human beings.

Ethics of WAR

Even in a state of war, Islam enjoins that one deals with the enemy nobly on the battlefield. Islam has drawn a clear line of distinction between the combatants and the non-combatants of the enemy country. As far as the non-combatant population is concerned such as women, children, the old and the infirm, etc., the instructions of the Prophet are as follows: “Do not kill any old person, any child or any woman” [1].

“Do not kill the monks in monasteries” or “Do not kill the people who are sitting in places of worship.” [2]

During a war, the Prophet saw the corpse of a woman lying on the ground and observed:

“She was not fighting. How then she came to be killed?” Thus non-combatants are guaranteed security of life even if their state is at war with an Islamic state.

Jihad

JIHAD While Islam in general is misunderstood in the western world, perhaps no other Islamic term evokes such strong reactions as the word ‘jihad’. The term ‘jihad’ has been much abused, to conjure up bizarre images of violent Muslims, forcing people to submit at the point of the sword. This myth was perpetuated throughout the centuries of mistrust during and after the Crusades. Unfortunately, it survives to this day.

The word Jihad comes from the root word jahada, which means to struggle. So jihad is literally an act of struggling, and this struggle can have various forms. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) referred to the struggle against the insidious suggestions of one's own soul as a form of jihad. Thus the inner struggle of being a person of virtue and submission to God in all aspects of life, is part of the essence of Islam.

P2

Jihad also refers to struggle against injustice. Islam, like many other religions, allows for armed self-defense, or retribution against tyranny, exploitation, and oppression. The Glorious Qur'an says: *"And why should ye not fight in the cause of God and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)? - Men, women, and children, whose cry is: 'Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from thee one who will protect; and raise for us from thee one who will help!'"* [Al-Qur'an 4:75]

Thus Islam enjoins upon its believers to strive utmost, in purifying themselves, as well as in establishing peace and justice in the society. A Muslim can never be at rest while there is injustice and oppression around her.

Martin Luther King Jr., quite aptly said:

"We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people."

Islam enjoins upon all Muslims to work actively to maintain the balance in which God created everything. However, regardless of how legitimate the cause may be, the Glorious Qur'an categorically denounces the killing of innocent people. Terrorizing the civilian population, whether by small groups or by states, can never be termed as jihad and can never be reconciled with the teachings of Islam.

History of Tolerance

Even Western scholars have repudiated the myth of Muslims coercing others to convert. The great historian De Lacy O'Leary wrote:

"History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims, sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated."[3]

Muslims ruled Spain for roughly 800 years. During this time, and up until they were finally forced out, the non-Muslims there were alive and flourishing. Additionally, Christian and Jewish minorities have survived in the Muslim lands of the Middle East for centuries. Countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan all have significant Christian and/or Jewish populations. This is not surprising to a Muslim, for his faith prohibits him from forcing others to see his point of view. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And God heareth and knoweth all things." [Al-Qur'an 2:256]

Islam- The Great Unifier

Far from being a militant dogma, Islam is a way of life that transcends race and ethnicity. The Glorious Qur'an repeatedly reminds us of our common origin:

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)." [Al-Qur'an 49:13]

Thus, it is the universality of its teachings that makes Islam the fastest growing religion in the world. In a world full of conflicts and deep schisms between human beings, a world that is threatened with terrorism, perpetrated by individuals and states, Islam is a beacon of light that offers hope for the future.

"There is no such thing as physically or mentally more superior or inferior because of race or religion or ethnicity or nationality or caste or language or color but indeed these are delusional mythical believes ideas from complete ignorance and lack of knowledge about humanity. But the person who is the most close to the truth of God is spiritually the most superior with pity mercy humbleness kindness and honesty and nobility and only God and only God alone knows about that person. There is no other God except only one God one Allah alone the most high the most supreme the greatest creator of all creation but is not a creation who is not everywhere but is in his throne up in heaven only and his knowledge is everywhere and he is all known. Adam, Abraham, Noah,

Solomon, Moses, Jesus were only servants prophets messengers of God Allah and Muhammad is God's last Prophet, Quran is God's final testament and Islam is God's complete religion." "Faisal Muhammad Fahim"

Far from being a militant dogma, Islam is a way of life that transcends race and ethnicity. The Glorious Qur'an repeatedly reminds us of our common origin: "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things))." [Al-Qur'an 49:13] And prophet Muhammad said " No one is more superior whether Arab or Non Arab, Black or White except by pity" According to Islam we are all children of Adam and Eve .So all of our forefather was one and he was Adam and he was made from clay. And our prophet Muhammad(Pbuh) taught us the same thing which was revealed to him through angel Gabriel from God.

The truth about sharia.

When the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, first began to receive revelations from God in 610 A.D., little did he know that they were the foundational stones for the formation of a future state to be refined piecemeal over the next 23 years. Complete with divinely-ordained laws, a blueprint for societal balance, and individual and mutual sense of accountability, this 'way of life' called Islam was presented to the general public through the medium of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

Compiled into one text, these revelations not only represent the holy book of the Muslims, the Quran, but are also the foremost source for Shariah, Islamic law. Shariah, quite literally, translates to a path leading to a water hole; figuratively, it refers to a clear, straight path. It is a body of laws derived mainly from the Quran and the example of the Prophet Muhammad, along with interpretive, analogous, and/or consensus rulings for cases where no evidence could be sought from primary sources.

The laws as present in the Quran are binding on Muslims and range from prohibition of alcohol consumption and gambling to setting punishments for such grave offences as adultery and theft. Due to their divine origin – directly conveyed to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, via the Archangel Gabriel – these laws are considered timeless and perfect, geared towards the success, welfare and peace of humans in this world and in the hereafter.

Shariah: Commitment to Justice

While many people, both Muslim and non-Muslim, vocally and vehemently oppose Shariah law today in favor of western legal systems, this disenchantment tends to stem from either an unclear understanding of Shariah or instances of misuse of justice 'back home' in the name of Shariah. In fact, the establishment and internalization of justice is the supreme purpose of Shariah. The Quran states, "Thus we have made you a just nation, that you be witnesses over mankind, and the Messenger be a witness over you." [2:143]

Further, God commands His believers: "O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be he rich or poor. Allah is a better Protector to both. So follow not the lusts, lest you avoid justice; and if you distort your witness or refuse to give it, verily Allah is Ever Well-Acquainted with what you do." [4:135]

This emphasis and primacy of justice was not at all introduced with Islam. In Ch. 57, verse 25, God reminds humankind of the fact that a similar code was brought by each previous Messenger so that "mankind may keep up justice." Therefore, it is no surprise that the Code of Hammurabi and the Law of Moses also contain retributive laws, similar to the famous "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Islam, however, adds the following corollary to such retribution: It is better to forgive.

Today, such laws are considered by the vast majority to be medieval, barbaric, and primitive. Shariah, likewise, is intractably coupled with merciless executions, chopping off of hands and honor killings. To accept such a generalized picture of an intensely complex legal system is not only a disservice to divinely ordained laws but also to one's own sense of integrity. Here is an attempt to dispel some of the prevalent myths and to bring clarity to the matter.

Shariah Law & Common Law

Both are committed to facilitating basic values such as freedom, human rights, justice, and equality. Shariah has its roots in the divine writ, whereas common law has been founded by human beings.

Consultation and participation in the process of decision-making (shura) is common to both laws. Certain laws and restrictions are timeless under Shariah (for instance, prohibition of alcohol) whereas laws and amendments can change at will within a democracy (for example, the ratification of the National Prohibition Act in the U.S. in 1919 and its official rejection in 1933).

Shariah Law and Common Law both espouse the establishment of a federal government, the declaration of freedom of religion, the abolishment of guilt by association, the right to privacy, and matters such as common defense and peacemaking. Shariah encompasses all areas of life, such as dietary laws, dress code, finances, and social aspects. On the other hand, common law leaves matters such as dietary considerations, relationships between consenting adults, dress code, and economic choices to the preferences of individuals.

Shariah: Dispelling Myths

The Shariah consists of hadd punishments and tazir punishments; hadd crimes overstep God's set boundaries whereas tazir crimes are committed against the society. The following hadd crimes have been mentioned in the Quran: murder, apostasy from Islam, theft, adultery, defamation, robbery and consumption of alcohol. Common tazir crimes include bribery, selling tainted or defected products, treason, usury, selling obscene pictures, etc. While hadd punishments have been fixed in the Quran (such as retributive killing for murder and the chopping off of a limb for theft) there are many safeguards which are important to mention. For any punishment to actually take place, proof must be provided, along with a confession of the crime or witnesses testifying against the criminal. If any of these is not sufficiently presented, Islamic law requires the hadd crime to be treated as a tazir crime. (Some of the tazir penalties include counseling, fines, flogging, confinement, etc.)

Similarly, if a thief could prove that he/she only stole because of need, then the Muslim society would be held at fault and made to supply that need and there would be no hadd punishment. Likewise, to be penalized for adultery, the couple had to be actually witnessed performing the physical act by four people who were in a position to identify both parties without doubt. A retributive punishment may be averted if the aggrieved party is willing to accept blood money or to forgive, which is always considered to be the higher road to take in Islam. Indeed, to forgive when one has the right to take revenge is the ultimate form of mercy, and God reminds us over and over in the Quran that while He is Just, He is also Most Merciful.

Forced marriages and honor killings are not at all sanctioned in Islam. Unfortunate deaths caused as a result of misguided emotions must be dealt by the courts as murders. Rape is a serious offence which is punishable by death, penalizing the rapist and exonerating the raped woman, treating her as a victim, not a complicit.

An example from the time of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, states:

Waa'il ibn Hujr said that a woman, in the life of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), [left her home] intending to go for Prayer [in the mosque] when a man seized her and had sexual intercourse with her, while she let out a scream [for help]. The man fled, and she told a man what had occurred. A group from amongst the immigrants were told of this and they chased the man down eventually capturing who they thought it was, and took the man to her. She said that it was the man who did it to her. They took the man (and the woman) to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), and the man was asked, 'Who is the man who did this to her?' The man confessed saying, "I am the one who did this to her, Oh Messenger of Allah!" The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said to the woman, "You can leave, for Allah has forgiven you!" The Prophet (pbuh) said to the man, "Your words are sound." So he said regarding the man who had raped her, "Stone him". He added, "This man has [sincerely] repented a type of repentance that if the people of Medinah would perform, Allah would accept it from them." (Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi)

As for stoning, Ruqayyah Waris Maqsood, a British Muslim author, explains, "The correct Islamic method of stoning according to Sharia was similar to that advised by the Pharisees at the time of Jesus – the person was held fast in a fixed position, and a stone or rock that it took two men to lift (i.e. was heavier than one man could lift alone) was to be dropped to crush the head – it was not someone tied to a post and rocks hurled at them, although this has been done in some cultures. The point was that if someone really had to be executed, it was to be done swiftly, with as little torture as possible, and usually publicly so that no vindictive person could do further nasty things behind the scenes and get away with it."

Muslim women may seek divorce for grounds such as physical or mental abuse, adultery, abandonment, etc. Alternatively, they may demand a divorce for no specific reason. With regards to custody of children, Shariah

permits parents to decide with whom the children will stay; if they are in disagreement, they may allow the courts to decide for them. In principle, however, mothers are preferred as the primary caretakers for young children, and fathers are required to provide for the children's maintenance. When it comes to inheritance, a woman's share is half of man, but then she has no obligation to make any financial contribution to the family, even if she earns; her money is hers to keep because her husband, father, or brother are required to provide for her. It is often claimed that a woman's testimony is half of a man – the vast majority of scholars view that verse of the Quran [2:282] in the context in which it occurs, i.e., testimony regarding financial transactions. Jamal Badawi, professor at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, explains that this verse cannot be taken as a general ruling because at another instance [24:6-9], no such exception has been made.

Non-Muslims under Sharia are protected so long as they pay the annual tax, called *jizya*; this is a nominal amount which does not amount to hardship on the part of the taxed. Their houses of worship are safe under Islamic rule and they are free to worship their religion; in other words, Sharia does not apply any pressure on them to change their existing religion to Islam. However, non-Muslims may voluntarily accept Islam. The various pockets of minorities which continue to exist in Muslim countries are testimony enough against theories which propound forced conversions and persecution of non-Muslims.

Unfortunately, in certain instances, Muslim countries have misused Shariah laws as a tool for injustice; however, that does not discount the fact that Shariah laws were sent by God to establish justice on earth. God's original laws and their intent remain free of human blemishes. At the same time, authoritative people in the West are recognizing the value of Shariah laws and the right for Muslims to have a choice in legal disputes regarding family and finances: from the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams to Ontario's former attorney general Marion Boyd to Harold Koh, the Legal Adviser of the Department of State under the Obama administration.

Shariah: Its Essence

Khurram Murad, the late Director General of the The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, United Kingdom, explained that there are three major themes in the Shariah: the individual, the society, and the family. The individual has been given a free will, a moral sense, and the knowledge of right and wrong; now it is up to him/her to realize his/her potential. Meanwhile, the individual's life, person, freedom, possessions and honor are sacred and inviolable. Anyone who transgresses against her/him is subject to punishment, depending on the crime committed. Similar levels of justice are expected of her/him, if s/he commits the crime or is complicit. The individual(s) must take responsibility for his/her action – this is why confessing is so important in the Shariah. And, the harsh punishments commensurate to the crime (whether *hadd* or *tazir*) serve as a definitive deterrent, specifically, for the criminal and his/her future actions and, generally, for the public. In fact, because the *hadd* punishments are already known, their severity is a preventive measure against lawlessness to begin with.

After all, it is the larger society which is at stake. "Social order and individual good should stand together – fused and harmonious, co-operating and assisting, interdependent and in equilibrium," wrote Khurram Murad. He further likened family as the "cradle of the individual and the cornerstone of society." Indeed, Shariah places great importance on all three of these "institutions" of life, returning over and over again to both the accountability and the inviolability of the human being – for a crime is essentially an act of injustice to one's own self, a sin against God.

God wishes for us to internalize His concept of justice so we do not upset the balance of society. Our accountability with God will take place on the Day of Judgment, but our accountability to aggrieved members of the society has to be carried out here. While some may continue to deem such punishments as harsh, Muslims believe they are divinely-ordained by the Creator for His creation.

"And perfect are the words of your Lord in truthfulness, and in justice; His words cannot be changed; He is the All-hearing, All-knowing." [6:116]

When the people of his tribe wanted pardon for a wealthy woman who was convicted of theft, Prophet Muhammad responded to their pleas thus: "O people, those who have gone before you were destroyed, because if any one of high rank committed theft amongst them, they spared him; and if anyone of low rank committed theft, they inflicted the prescribed punishment upon him. By Allah, if Fatima, daughter of Muhammad, were to steal, I would have her hand cut off."

Umar, the second caliph of Islam, was renowned for his justice. Any of his subjects could easily approach him with a question or a complaint. He also used to walk through his city in the cover of darkness to check upon the welfare of his subjects. Once, when he tried to put a ceiling on the marriage-gift given to women upon marriage, a woman stood up and protested, using a Quranic verse as support. He recognized his mistake and responded, "The woman is right and Umar is wrong." When the third caliph, Uthman, sued a Jewish subject in court for stealing his court of armor, the caliph lost the case because the judge dismissed his two sons' testimonies as insufficient due to their direct relationship to him.

By Saulat Pervez

Understanding what is not Jihad according to Islam.

If you open a modern Oxford English dictionary, you would probably find the definition of Jihad as "a holy war undertaken by Muslims against non-believers". This is a very poor definition. Before trying to define what Jihad is, we should first define what it is NOT.

Jihad is NOT Holy War

Jihad is NOT blowing up one's self (Suicide is a sin in Islam)

Hadith : Shahi Bukhari.

Book 23. Funerals (Al-Janaa'iz).

Column 002, Book 023, Hadith Number 445.

Narrated By Thabit bin Ad-Dahhak : The Prophet (p.b.u.h) said, "Whoever intentionally swears falsely by a religion other than Islam, then he is what he has said, (e.g. if he says, 'If such thing is not true then I am a Jew,' he is really a Jew). And whoever commits suicide with piece of iron will be punished with the same piece of iron in the Hell Fire." Narrated Jundab the Prophet said, "A man was inflicted with wounds and he committed suicide, and so Allah said: My slave has caused death on himself hurriedly, so I forbid Paradise for him."

Jihad is NOT killing innocent people

Jihad is NOT flying a plane into a building packed with civilians

Jihad is NOT fighting out of anger and hatred

Jihad is NOT killing others just because they don't agree with you

Jihad is NOT killing others just because they are not Muslims

The real meaning of Jihad

Jihad is an Arabic word from the root Jee Ha Da. It literally means to struggle or strive. Jihad is struggling or striving in the way or sake of Allah. Jihad takes a very important status in the doctrine of Islam and is one of the basic duties for every Muslim.

Though, it has nothing whatsoever to do with the term Holy War. Such a term, or its equivalent doesn't exist in the Islamic doctrine. The Christian Crusaders in the mid-ages invented this ideology of Holy War.

There is nothing "Holy" about wars. Wars only involve killings and disasters!

Jihad has many forms,

Jihad of the heart/soul (jihad bin nafs/qalb)

Jihad by the tongue (jihad bil lisan)

Jihad by the pen/knowledge (jihad bil qalam/ilm)

Jihad by the hand (jihad bil yad)

Jihad by the sword (jihad bis saif)

Jihad of the Heart/Soul

Jihad of the heart/soul; in Arabic: jihad bin nafs/qalb. It is referred as "the greater Jihad" (al-jihad al-akbar).

It is one's inner struggle of good against evil; refraining oneself from the whispers of Shaitan (Satan).

This process involves allowing Islam to transform one's soul to achieving internal peace; and forgoing the hatred and anger.

“Jihad is ordained for you (Muslims) though you dislike it, and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know.”

{Quran, Surah 2: Al-Baqarah, Verse 216; Mohsin Translation}

Jihad by the tongue

Jihad by the tongue; in Arabic: jihad bil lisan.

It is defending Islam and spreading Islam by scholarly lectures, speeches and debates. It often overlaps with Da'awah (invitation to Islam, or spreading the message of Islam).

In The Last Sermon, Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) asked the listeners whether he has passed on the message to them; and they confirmed affirmatively.

Then the Messenger of Allah ordered all those present today to pass on the same message to those who are not here today; and the last person to hear the message should understand it better than the people here.

Jihad by the pen/knowledge

Jihad by the pen/knowledge; in Arabic: jihad bil qalam/ilm.

This form of Jihad involves scholarly research of Islam in aiding the spread and defence of Islam; and publishing written articles in clearing misconceptions and correction lies against Islam.

Examples of such Jihad include the research and discovery of scientific evidences, literature miracles and mathematical miracles from the Quran. Messenger of Allah once stated that the ink of a scholar is holier than the blood of a martyr; and one who is reading looks handsome in front of Allah.

Jihad by the hand

Jihad by the hand; in Arabic: jihad bil yad.

This is a Jihad of action rather than words. At certain areas, it overlaps with Zakart (charity) and Hajj (pilgrimage).

Some of its examples include giving charity to the poor and needy, performing Hajj or Ummrah, helping those who need help, saving people's lives, etc. These are more of physical deeds instead of words.

“A person whose feet become dust ridden because of [striving] in the way of Allah will never be touched by the flames of Hell”

{ Sahih Bukhari 2811}

The most beautiful of all Jihad is a perfect Hajj. It involves testing of one's patience and piety to the apex. The whole period of Hajj, with just one intention and aim, worshiping Allah!

Jihad by the sword

Jihad by the sword; in Arabic: jihad bis saif. In contrary to Jihad of the heart/soul; this form of Jihad is referred as “the lesser jihad” (al-jihad alasghar).

Sometimes it is necessary to undertake Jihad by the sword. This would include usage of arsenals and engaging in a combat. This could be simply a bunch of freedom fighters or an organised campaign of army.

Jihad by the sword is use of arms to engage into a combat. It is not misuse of arms to create violence.

There are only two situations where Jihad by the sword is allowed to be undertaken.

- 1) For self-defence. When someone attacks you or when your nation has been attacked. Engaging into combat due to self defence.
- 2) Fighting against evil and unjust. It is also a sin if a Muslim sees unjust been done, capable of stopping it, yet not doing anything about it. This can include war on drug, war on child

The American administration today seems to be launching a global war on terror, but are they the first to launch the war on terror?

The Muslims already announced the war on terror fourteen centuries ago, under the name of Jihad bis saif!

There are many rules and limitations when engaging in combat under the title of Jihad. For example, civilians are not to be harmed; trees are not to be cut down; asylum should be granted to surrendering enemy soldiers; etc.

“And if anyone of the Mushrikun seeks your protection then grant him protection, so that he may hear the Word of Allah, and then escort him to where he can be secure, that is because they are men who know not.”

{Quran, Surah 9: At-Taubah, Verse 6; Mohsin Translation}

The above verse states that when an enemy soldier surrenders during a battle, the Muslim soldiers must grant asylum and in addition, escort him to safety!

The treatment for prisoners of war is also clearly stated in the Quran. Prisoners of war under Muslim prisons are to eat, drink and dress the same Muslim soldiers eat, drink and dress.

And even under the unfortunate event of shortage of food, it is the prisoners who are to eat first before the Muslim soldiers guarding them!

A closer look at the Sword

Despite the fact that Jihad by the sword is the lesser Jihad, it is the only form of Jihad that most of the people in the world perceive Jihad as. This is unfortunate, especially for the Muslims. Many so-called “teachers of Islam” have been misusing this to assemble their so-called “holy army” to fight their so-called “holy war”.

But you can’t blame the religion for what a few of its people do. In every society, there is a black sheep.

Self-Defence:

Since Jihad by the sword has been overwhelmingly magnified in the wrong angle, let’s take a closer look at it in the right angle. What is wrong with Jihad by the sword if it is fighting for self-defence?

In the early years of revelation of Islam in Mecca, Muslims were not granted permission from Allah to fight. So the Muslims suffered both moral and physical humiliations from the non-Muslims in Mecca.

The first verses regarding Jihad were then revealed allowing Muslims to undertake self-defence.

“And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allah likes not the transgressors.

{Quran, Surah 2: Al-Baqarah, Verse 190; Mohsin Translation}

Many of the Quranic verses are being quoted out of context to wrongly justify terrorist actions. Yet, most of those verses are only referring to a particular situation; such as Battle of Badr or Battle of Uhud.

Intention and war against Satan:

“Those who believe, fight in the Cause of Allah, and those who disbelieve, fight in the cause of Satan. So fight against the friends of Satan. Ever feeble indeed is the plot of Satan.”

{Quran, Surah 4: An-Nisa, Verse 76; Mohsin Translation}

Now the second question is, what is wrong in fighting against evil and liberating people from sufferings?

“Once a person came to the Prophet (sws) and said that some people fight for the spoils of war, some for fame and some to show off their valour; he then asked the Prophet (sws): “Which one of them fights in the way of Allah”. The Prophet (sws) replied: “Only that person fights in the way of Allah who sets foot in the battlefield to raise high the name of Allah”.

{ Sahih Bukhari 2810}

Who is a Holy Warrior?

According to the Quran, a martyr who died in the way of Jihad is promised Paradise. But what are the criteria of martyr, or in other words, what are the criteria of a Holy Warrior undertaking the True Jihad?

The most famous of all Hadith is the one regarding everything we do are judged by our intentions; so as it is mentioned in the previous chapter.

So who is an example of a Holy Warrior?

Ali bin Abu Talib, cousin of Prophet Mohammed (s.a.w) and the fourth Caliph of the Islamic Ummah is a good example.

During one of the battles, Ali was about to give a deathblow to an enemy soldier. Just then, that enemy soldier spat at Ali. Ali then suddenly stopped, threw down his sword and refused to kill that enemy soldier.

After the battle, Ali's soldiers asked Ali why he suddenly stopped and refused to kill that enemy soldier on the battlefield.

Ali explained that he got angry when that enemy soldier spat at him. So if he had killed that enemy soldier right then, he would be killing out of his own anger and no longer fighting for Justice. In the sight of Allah, he would then be no different from a murderer.

Brothers and Sisters that is how we should see a Holy Warrior!

One of the most manipulated concepts in Islam today is the concept of jihad.

The concept of jihad is indeed a Quranic one, but sadly, a false and twisted version of this Quranic concept has been used by terrorists acting in the name of Islam to commit various terrorist acts. These terrorist acts, which occur all over the world, aim at the indiscriminate killing of innocent people. They are being undertaken in the name of “jihad”. These non-Islamic acts have gone a long way towards distorting the image of Islam.

As with any religious concept, its correct definition lies in the scripture and not in the interpretation of humans.

To fully understand the Quranic concept of jihad, it is essential to address the following issues:

1- The Quranic definition of the word jihad

2- What is “The cause of God”?

3- Are the ones who explode themselves in 'suicide bombings' really going to Heaven as they have been led to believe?

4- Does the concept of a 'holy war' have Quranic authorisation?

FIRST: The Quranic definition of the word jihad

The literal definition of the word jihad is: striving to achieve a goal, while the Quranic definition of the word is “striving with one's self and one's money in the cause of God”.

This Quranic definition is confirmed in a number of Quranic verses which speak of jihad. The following are some examples:

“The true believers are those who believe in God and His messenger, then attain the status of having no doubt whatsoever, and strive (jahadu) with their money and their lives in the cause of God. These are the truthful ones.” 49:15

“Those who believe, and emigrate, and strive (jahadu) in the cause of God with their money and their lives, are far greater in rank in the sight of God. These are the winners.” 9:20

“As for the messenger and those who believed with him, they eagerly strive (jahadu) with their money and their lives. These have deserved all the good things; they are the winners.” 9:88

p.s. the word “jahadu” is the verb form of the noun “jihad.

SECOND : The cause of God

Now that we have established that jihad means to strive with one's self and one's money in the cause of God, we need to determine what is the Quranic meaning of the phrase: "the cause of God"? Striving to uphold the "cause of God" simply means striving to uphold all God's commandments and a strive to condemn all God's prohibitions. Hence, a jihad in the cause of God is a strive to preach and uphold God's way and God's Law. Since the word jihad has been manipulated to advocate violence and the killing of innocent people, it is necessary to establish, with clear Quranic evidence, that the "cause of God" does not allow unlawful killing or violence.

1- First, we must always be aware of the prime declaration in the Quran which states that God does not advocate sin:

"God never advocates sin. Are you saying about God what you do not know?" 7:28

2- Following from that, the Quran states categorically that killing any innocent soul is a gross sin:

"..... You shall not kill - God has made life sacred - except in the course of justice. These are His commandments to you, that you may understand." 6:151

"You shall not kill any person - for God has made life sacred - except in the course of justice." 17:33

The prohibition to kill any innocent soul has always been the law of God, in the Quran and in all previous scripture:

"....., we decreed for the Children of Israel that anyone who murders any person who had not committed murder or horrendous crimes, it shall be as if he murdered all the people. " 5:32

3- God does not allow fighting (war) except in the case of self defence:

" If they leave you alone, refrain from fighting you, and offer you peace, then God gives you no excuse to fight them" 4:90

"If they resort to peace, so shall you, and put your trust in God. He is the Hearer, the Omniscient." 8:61

"do not aggress; God dislikes the aggressors." 5:87

4- God commands that there will be no compulsion in religion:

"There shall be no compulsion in religion ..." 2:256

"You have your religion and I have mine" 109:6

"Had your Lord willed, all the people on earth would have believed. Do you want to force the people to become believers?" 10:99

The commands in the above verses are very clear. The Quran confirms that belief must be attained voluntarily and not forcibly. If we are forced into becoming Muslims, there would be no credit due. The choice must be a voluntary one.

"Proclaim: "This is the truth from your Lord," then Whoever wills let him believe, and whoever wills let him disbelieve" 18:29

"You shall remind, for your mission is to deliver this reminder. You have no power over them" 88:21-22

The message of no compulsion in religion is once again emphasised in the above Quranic words.

5- Quran advocates pardon, forgiveness and tolerance:

"You shall resort to pardon, advocate tolerance, and disregard the ignorant" 7:199

"Tell those who believe to forgive those who do not long for the days of (meeting) God. He will fully pay everyone for whatever they have earned." 45:14

The Quran condemns the killing or even the persecution of people merely because they embrace a different religion. The Quran mandates absolute freedom of religion among all people. Respect and mutual co-existence must be exercised with those of other religions. The Quran urges Muslims to treat such people kindly and equitably:

"God does not enjoin you from befriending those who do not fight you because of religion, and do not evict you from your homes. You may befriend them and be equitable towards them. God loves the equitable." 60:8

As all the above verses indicate, the Quran is clear in prohibiting all violence, unlawful killing and also forcing others into Islam.

Attacks on civilians and on innocent people around the world by these terrorist groups is a violation of all the verses quoted above. This is an act that is condemned by all religions including Islam.

THIRD : Are the ones who explode themselves in 'suicide bombings' really going to Heaven as they have been led to believe?

Suicide is a state of disbelief and loss of faith that is condemned by God throughout the Quran. In the Quran, God commands the believers never to despair or lose hope but instead have faith in God and work for a brighter future:

" none despairs of God's grace except the disbelieving people." 12:87

It is true that many of the youth who commit suicide bombing live in dire situations and there is no denying of their suffering and oppression. But there is no justification for breaking God's commandment. Oppression is not a reason to break God's law. On the contrary, oppression is a good reason to hold tight to these commandments and to show more faith in God. Two wrongs do not make a right.

Sadly, many young people in Islamic countries who get drafted into one of the terrorist groups, are completely brain washed to believe that when they explode themselves in what is known as "suicide bombing" that they die as martyrs and are sent directly to Heaven!

Young male youth, who are easy prey for the devious politically motivated preachers, are totally brain washed into believing that beautiful virgins are waiting for them in Paradise!

Those who kill innocent people in the name of Islam or in the name of God, and who think of themselves as martyrs, should think twice. Their act is categorically condemned by God as per the above verses of the Quran. These people are disobeying God's commandments and instead upholding the fabricated claims of their teachers/leaders!

"You shall spend in the cause of God; do not throw yourselves with your own hands into destruction. You shall be charitable; God loves the charitable." 2:195

"O you who believe, do not consume each others' properties illicitly - only mutually acceptable transactions are permitted. You shall not kill yourselves. God is Merciful towards you.

"Anyone who commits these transgressions, maliciously and deliberately, we will condemn him to Hell. This is easy for God to do." 4:29-30

As per all the Quranic verses presented, we understand the following:

1- Killing an innocent soul is a great sin in the sight of God

2- Suicide in any form is condemned by God.

3- The Quran does not promise Paradise to those who commit suicide but rather warn of great retribution.

FOURTH : Is there such a thing as a "Holy War" in the Quran?

Various terrorist groups portray "jihad" as a "holy war". The media in the west has been sucked up into accommodating or reporting this false interpretation.

In the light of the Quran, there is no war which is holy; not under any circumstances. In fact, the whole text of the Quran promotes peace rather than war. The word Islam itself is a derivative of the word "salam" which means peace.

There are times, and in specific circumstances, when the option of war is allowed. This stems from the fact that the Quran advocates opposition to aggression and oppression. And thus, in such circumstances war is allowed but only as an act of self defence, but never as an act of aggression.

Whenever there is a possibility to avoid war, then this alternative, as long as it is reasonable, must be taken.

"You shall prepare for them all the power you can muster, and all the equipment you can mobilise, that you may frighten the enemies of God, your enemies, as well as others who are not known to you; God knows them.

Whatever you spend in the cause of God will be repaid to you generously, without the least injustice. If they resort to peace, so shall you, and put your trust in God. He is the Hearer, the Omniscient." 8:60-61

"Permission (to fight) is granted to those who are being persecuted, since injustice has befallen them, and God is certainly able to support them. They were evicted from their homes unjustly, for no reason other than saying, "Our Lord is God." If it were not for God's supporting of some people against others, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and masjids - where the name of God is commemorated frequently - would have been destroyed. Absolutely, God supports those who support Him. God is Powerful, Almighty." 22:39-40

The case made in the Quran for war, and perhaps the most important and often confused as a holy war, is the war "in the cause of God". Fighting an oppressor or aggressor is fighting against oppression or aggression, thus it is fighting for justice and therefore in the cause of God.

"You may fight "in the cause of God" against those who attack you, but do not aggress. God does not love the aggressors." 2:190

12 Clearly as the above verse states, fighting in the cause of God is a case of fighting an aggressor and thus is a case of fighting in self defence.

Fighting oppression "in the cause of God" is also the subject of 4:75

"Those who readily fight in the cause of God are those who forsake this world in favour of the Hereafter.

Whoever fights in the cause of God, then gets killed, or attains victory, we will surely grant him a great recompense. Why should you not fight in the cause of God when weak men, women, and children are imploring:

"Our Lord, deliver us from this community whose people are oppressive, and be You our Lord and Master."

4:74-75

Thus it becomes clear that the concept of a strive "in the cause of God", is not restricted to the case of fighting a war "in the cause of God", it is also about striving with one's self and one's money in the cause of God. This could be a strive to spread the "way of God", or even giving charity as per the words:

"You shall spend in the cause of God; do not throw yourselves with your own hands into destruction. You shall be charitable; God loves the charitable." 2:195

The underlined words confirm the relationship between spending "in the cause of God" and having that money spent towards charitable causes.

To conclude, it is quite clear that the word jihad has been badly manipulated by those with political aims, and in violation of the Quranic truth. The word 'holy' has never been used in the Quran in connection with war. There simply is no reference anywhere in the Quran for what they call "holy war".

There are times when war is permitted, but as we have seen in all the Quranic words, it is only permitted as a practise of self defence, and it is never called a "holy war". Islam resolves around the concept of peace:

"If they resort to peace, so shall you, and put your trust in God. He is the Hearer, the Omniscient." 8:61

Islam and Women

Oppressed, inferior, and unequal – for many people, these are the first words that come to mind when thinking about women in Islam. These stereotypes confuse Islam with cultural practices and fail to recognize that Islam has empowered women with the most progressive rights since the 7th century. In Islam, women are not inferior or unequal to men. This brochure presents the actual teachings of Islam regarding the rights, roles, and responsibilities of women, with a special focus on gender equality in Islam.

At a time when female children were buried alive in Arabia and women were considered transferable property, Islam honored women in society by elevating them and protecting them with unprecedented rights. Islam gave women the right to education, to marry someone of their choice, to retain their identity after marriage, to divorce, to work, to own and sell property, to seek protection by the law, to vote, and to participate in civic and political engagement.

In 610 C.E., God began to reveal the message of Islam to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him (pbuh), in Mecca. Muhammad (pbuh) called people towards the belief in one God and encouraged them to be just and merciful to one another. In reforming the pagan Arab society, he particularly transformed their mindset regarding the treatment of women. Islam abolished the practice of killing female children and raised the stature of women in society to one of dignity, esteem, and privilege.

God devotes an entire chapter of the Quran, the holy book of Islam, to women. In addition, God directly addresses women repeatedly throughout the Quran. Islam proclaims that all human beings, men and women, are born in a pure state. The goal of every Muslim is to preserve this purity by shunning evil tendencies and beautifying their inner being with virtuous traits.

Islam further confirms that both men and women are equal in the sight of God. In the Quran, God declares, "...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you..." (49:13) At another place in the Quran, God clearly states that all humans are equal: "To whoever, male or female, does good deeds and has faith, We shall give a good life and reward them according to the best of their actions." (16:97)

While Islam clearly establishes that men and women are equal, it does recognize that they are not identical. God created men and women with unique physiological and psychological attributes. In Islam, these differences are embraced as vital components to a healthy family and community structure with each individual contributing their own distinctive talents to society.

Hence, God's rules apply to both genders, but in diverse ways. For example, God commanded women to cover certain parts of their body, including their hair, to preserve their modesty. Men are also required to cover parts

13 of their body out of modesty, but not in the same way as women. Therefore, God commanded both men and women to be modest; yet, the manner in which they observe it is different. Similarly, the rights, roles, and responsibilities of women are evenly balanced with those of men but are not necessarily the same. As Islam has granted individual identities to men and women, a constant comparison between the two is futile. Each plays a unique role to mutually uphold social morality and societal balance. The following overview details a wide range of women's rights in Islam. It addresses some common misconceptions and provides insight into the diverse roles and responsibilities women fulfill in society. It must also be mentioned here that Muslims are not always representative of Islam and may follow their cultural influences or personal interests. In so doing, they not only disenfranchise women, they also go against the clear guidelines laid out in Islam regarding the treatment of women. Therefore, their practices go against the liberties and entitlements which Islam empowers women with, as shown below.

Education

Back in the 7th century, Muhammad (pbuh) declared that the pursuit of knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim – male and female. This declaration was very clear and was largely implemented by Muslims throughout history. One of the most influential scholars of Islam was Muhammad's wife, Aisha. After his death, men and women would travel to learn from her because she was considered a great scholar of Islam. The recognition of female scholarship and women's participation in academia has been encouraged and practiced throughout the majority of Islamic history. For instance, al-Qarawiyyin Mosque and University, the oldest running university, was funded by a woman, Fatima al-Fihri, in Morocco in 859 C.E.

Motherhood

In Islam, God clearly gives mothers a high status and elevates their position in the family. In the Quran, God mentions all the sacrifices mothers make in bearing children to remind people to treat their mothers with love, respect, and care. Emphasizing the importance of mothers, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Heaven lies under the feet of your mother."

On another occasion, a man repeatedly asked Muhammad (pbuh), "Who amongst the people is the most worthy of my good companionship?" Each time, the Prophet (pbuh) replied, "Your mother." When the man asked for the fourth time, he replied, "Your father."

Politics and Social Services

Among the early Muslims, women were active participants in the cohesive functioning of the society. Women expressed their opinions freely and their advice was actively sought. Women nursed the wounded during battles, and some even participated on the battlefield. Women traded openly in the marketplace, so much so that the second caliph, Umar, appointed a woman, Shaffa bint Abdullah, as the supervisor of the bazaar. In Islamic history, women participated in government, public affairs, lawmaking, scholarship, and teaching. To continue to uphold this tradition, women are encouraged to actively participate in improving, serving, and leading the different aspects of the community.

Inheritance

Before Islam, women all across the globe were deprived of inheritance and were themselves considered property to be inherited by men. Islam gave women the right to own property and inherit from relatives, which was a revolutionary concept in the seventh century.

Whether a woman is a wife, mother, sister, or daughter, she receives a certain share of her deceased relative's property. This share depends on her degree of relationship to the deceased and the number of heirs. While many societies around the world denied women inheritance, Islam assured women this right, illustrating the universal justice of Islam's divine law.

Financial Responsibilities

In Islam, women are not obligated to earn or spend any money on housing, food, or general expenses. If a woman is married, her husband must fully support her financially and if she's not married, that responsibility belongs to her closest male relative (father, brother, uncle, etc).

She also has the right to work and spend the money she earns as she wishes. She has no obligation to share her money with her husband or any other family members, although she may choose to do so out of good will. For instance, Khadija, the wife of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), was one of the most successful businesswomen of Mecca, and she freely spent from her wealth to support her husband and the cause of Islam.

At the time of marriage, a woman is entitled to a financial gift (dowry) from her husband.

14 This dowry is legally owned by her and cannot be used by anyone else. In the case of divorce, she has the right to keep whatever she owned before the divorce and anything she personally earned after marriage. The former husband has no right whatsoever to any of her belongings. This ensures a woman's financial security and independence, allowing her to support herself in the case of divorce.

Marriage

A woman has the right to accept or reject marriage proposals and her approval is required to complete the marriage contract. She cannot be forced to marry someone against her will and if this occurs for cultural reasons, it is in direct opposition of Islam. By the same principle, women also have the right to seek divorce if they are dissatisfied with their marriage.

In Islam, marriage is based on mutual peace, love, and compassion. God says about Himself, "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy..." (Quran 30:21) Muhammad (pbuh) embodied the best character and is a role model for all Muslims. His example of being helpful around the household and treating his family with compassion and love is a tradition that Muslims strive to implement in their daily lives. Muhammad (pbuh) treated his wives with the utmost respect and honor and was never abusive towards them. One of his traditions clearly states, "The best of you are those who are best to their wives."

Dignity and Protection from Harm

Any form of emotional, physical, or psychological abuse is prohibited in Islam and the improper treatment of women is no exception to this rule. Indeed, there is no teaching in Islam, when studied in its complete context, which condones any kind of domestic violence. Islam clearly disallows any form of oppression or abuse, according to Dr. Zainab Alwani, a leading female Muslim scholar. It cannot be stated enough times that anyone who exercises unjust authority in the name of Islam is actually doing so to uphold their own cultural influences or personal interests. All of God's creation is dignified and protected under Islamic law.

Modesty

In an environment which constantly emphasizes the physical form through various media, women are constantly faced with an unattainable standard of beauty. Although Muslim women are falsely classified as oppressed based on their modest dress, they are in fact liberated from such objectification by the society around them. This modest appearance, which includes veiling, highlights a woman's personality and character instead of her physical figure and promotes a deeper appreciation for who she is as a person. In this regard, Muslim women identify with Mary, the mother of Jesus (pbuh), who is known for her piety and modesty.

In conclusion, Islam has an extensive tradition of protecting the civil liberties of women based on the guidelines set forth by God and His Prophet. Women are empowered with many rights and protections under Islamic law and are honored with a dignified stature in society.

QUESTION: WHY WOMEN CAN'T HAVE 4 HUSBANDS?

Answer: if a man has 4 wives & they have a child there would be 1 father & that's the husband only. If a woman has 4 husbands & she gives birth it would be confusing to know who is father out of 4. but now with DNA test u can find out. And if suddenly all 4 wives want to be a mom. they can go to 1 husband make love, wait couple of more months & finally give birth of their child. in the same time 4 husbands want to have their own baby with 1 wife & only she can give birth the husband can't give birth & they don't want their baby in a test tube or other women to give birth except their own married wife. Now they will either kill each other to have 1 to make love with his wife or divorce her or leave her forever or even worst rape & kill her simply creating the most dangerous situation. A man is allowed to marry up to 4 only not 5 or 6. first the rule is to marry only 1. & then if he can do justice & treat all 4 100% equally and of course take her all responsibility meaning can effort her 100% only then he can marry up to 4. Prophet Muhammad said the best of man is the 1 who is the best to his wife. A man asked the prophet who should I do the most favor to 1st he replied your mother man asked 2nd he replied your mother man asked 3rd he replied your mother, man asked for 4th time he replied your father. The mother has 3 times more right than the father. He also said the heaven is in beneath the foot of your mother. A wife's heaven is beneath the foot of her husband. In Quran it says men are like the clothes to their wives & wives are like the clothes to their husbands. It means they are both equal to Allah god even though their physical shapes & purpose are different. & clothes were very important things in that time & still are. It's a grace a mercy & a

blessing of god Allah that a woman can give birth and be a mother which man can never do or earn that right & respect & position of a woman in Islam. But in Christianity and Judaism giving birth and having the monthly period or mens was seen as a punishment & a curse from god. In the past they even dared to ask if a woman had a soul ? Again the maximum wives a man can have are 4 not anymore. The bible has no restrictions on how many wives or husband can a person have it's the church's decision to have 1 husband & 1 wife. In Islam a woman can have only 1 husband. For more information search in Google by your own self & believe in the evidence from god the holy Quran which provides peace & protection for humanity. May Allah guide & protect all. Only love peace & god bless for all.

Life of Muhammad (pbuh) by a Non-Muslim

by By Prof. K. S. Ramakrishna Rao, Head of the Dept. of Philosophy, Govt. College for Women. University of Mysore, Mandya-571401 (Karnataka, India).

Re-printed from "Islam and Modern age", Hyderabad, March 1978.

In the desert of Arabia was Mohammad born, according to Muslim historians, on April 20, 571. The name means highly praised. He is to me the greatest mind among all the sons of Arabia. He means so much more than all the poets and kings that preceded him in that impenetrable desert of red sand.

When he appeared Arabia was a desert — a nothing. Out of nothing a new world was fashioned by the mighty spirit of Mohammad — a new life, a new culture, a new civilization, a new kingdom which extended from Morocco to Indies and influenced the thought and life of three continents — Asia, Africa and Europe. When I thought of writing on Mohammad the prophet, I was a bit hesitant because it was to write about a religion I do not profess and it is a delicate matter to do so for there are many persons professing various religions and belonging to diverse school of thought and denominations even in same religion. Though it is sometimes, claimed that religion is entirely personal yet it can not be gain-said that it has a tendency to envelop the whole universe seen as well unseen. It somehow permeates something or other our hearts, our souls, our minds their conscious as well as subconscious and unconscious levels too. The problem assumes overwhelming importance when there is a deep conviction that our past, present and future all hang by the soft delicate, tender silked cord. If we further happen to be highly sensitive, the center of gravity is very likely to be always in a state of extreme tension. Looked at from this point of view, the less said about other religion the better. Let our religions be deeply hidden and embedded in the resistance of our innermost hearts fortified by unbroken seals on our lips.

But there is another aspect of this problem. Man lives in society. Our lives are bound with the lives of others willingly or unwillingly, directly or indirectly. We eat the food grown in the same soil, drink water, from the same the same spring and breathe the same air. Even while staunchly holding our own views, it would be helpful, if we try to adjust ourselves to our surroundings, if we also know to some extent, how the mind our neighbor moves and what the main springs of his actions are. From this angle of vision it is highly desirable that one should try to know all religions of the world, in the proper spirit, to promote mutual understanding and better appreciation of our neighborhood, immediate and remote.

Further, our thoughts are not scattered as appear to be on the surface. They have got themselves crystallized around a few nuclei in the form of great world religions and living faiths that guide and motivate the lives of millions that inhabit this earth of ours. It is our duty, in one sense if we have the ideal of ever becoming a citizen of the world before us, to make a little attempt to know the great religions and system of philosophy that have ruled mankind.

In spite of these preliminary remarks, the ground in these field of religion, where there is often a conflict between intellect and emotion is so slippery that one is constantly reminded of fools that rush in where angels fear to tread. It is also not so complex from another point of view. The subject of my writing is about the tenets of a religion which is historic and its prophet who is also a historic personality. Even a hostile critic like Sir William Muir speaking about the holy Quran says that. "There is probably in the world no other book which has remained twelve centuries with so pure text." I may also add Prophet Mohammad is also a historic personality, every event of whose life has been most carefully recorded and even the minutest details preserved intact for the posterity. His life and works are not wrapped in mystery.

My work today is further lightened because those days are fast disappearing when Islam was highly misrepresented by some of its critics for reasons political and otherwise. Prof. Bevan writes in Cambridge Medieval History, "Those account of Mohammad and Islam which were published in Europe before the beginning of 19th century are now to be regarded as literary curiosities." My problem is to write this

monograph is easier because we are now generally not fed on this kind of history and much time need be spent on pointing out our misrepresentation of Islam.

The theory of Islam and Sword for instance is not heard now frequently in any quarter worth the name. The principle of Islam that there is no compulsion in religion is well known. Gibbon, a historian of world repute says, "A pernicious tenet has been imputed to Mohammadans, the duty of extirpating all the religions by sword." This charge based on ignorance and bigotry, says the eminent historian, is refuted by Quran, by history of Musalman conquerors and by their public and legal toleration of Christian worship. The great success of Mohammad's life had been effected by sheer moral force, without a stroke of sword.

But in pure self-defense, after repeated efforts of conciliation had utterly failed, circumstances dragged him into the battlefield. But the prophet of Islam changed the whole strategy of the battlefield. The total number of casualties in all the wars that took place during his lifetime when the whole Arabian Peninsula came under his banner, does not exceed a few hundreds in all. But even on the battlefield he taught the Arab barbarians to pray, to pray not individually, but in congregation to God the Almighty. During the dust and storm of warfare whenever the time for prayer came, and it comes five times a every day, the congregation prayer had not to be postponed even on the battlefield. A party had to be engaged in bowing their heads before God while other was engaged with the enemy. After finishing the prayers, the two parties had to exchange their positions. To the Arabs, who would fight for forty years on the slight provocation that a camel belonging to the guest of one tribe had strayed into the grazing land belonging to other tribe and both sides had fought till they lost 70,000 lives in all; threatening the extinction of both the tribes to such furious Arabs, the Prophet of Islam taught self-control and discipline to the extent of praying even on the battlefield. In an aged of barbarism, the Battlefield itself was humanized and strict instructions were issued not to cheat, not to break trust, not to mutilate, not to kill a child or woman or an old man, not to hew down date palm nor burn it, not to cut a fruit tree, not to molest any person engaged in worship. His own treatment with his bitterest enemies is the noblest example for his followers. At the conquest of Mecca, he stood at the zenith of his power. The city which had refused to listen to his mission, which had tortured him and his followers, which had driven him and his people into exile and which had unrelentingly persecuted and boycotted him even when he had taken refuge in a place more than 200 miles away, that city now lay at his feet. By the laws of war he could have justly avenged all the cruelties inflicted on him and his people. But what treatment did he accord to them? Mohammad's heart flowed with affection and he declared, "This day, there is no REPROOF against you and you are all free." "This day" he proclaimed, "I trample under my feet all distinctions between man and man, all hatred between man and man."

This was one of the chief objects why he permitted war in self defense, that is to unite human beings. And when once this object was achieved, even his worst enemies were pardoned. Even those who killed his beloved uncle, Hamazah, mangled his body, ripped it open, even chewed a piece of his liver.

The principles of universal brotherhood and doctrine of the equality of mankind which he proclaimed represents one very great contribution of Mohammad to the social uplift of humanity. All great religions have preached the same doctrine but the prophet of Islam had put this theory into actual practice and its value will be fully recognized, perhaps centuries hence, when international consciousness being awakened, racial prejudices may disappear and greater brotherhood of humanity come into existence.

Miss. Sarojini Naidu speaking about this aspect of Islam says, "It was the first religion that preached and practiced democracy; for in the mosque, when the minaret is sounded and the worshipers are gathered together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and the king kneel side by side and proclaim, God alone is great." The great poetess of India continues, "I have been struck over and over again by this indivisible unity of Islam that makes a man instinctively a brother. When you meet an Egyptian, an Algerian and Indian and a Turk in London, it matters not that Egypt is the motherland of one and India is the motherland of another."

Mahatma Gandhi, in his inimitable style, says "Some one has said that Europeans in South Africa dread the advent Islam — Islam that civilized Spain, Islam that took the torch light to Morocco and preached to the world the Gospel of brotherhood. The Europeans of South Africa dread the Advent of Islam. They may claim equality with the white races. They may well dread it, if brotherhood is a sin. If it is equality of colored races then their dread is well founded."

Every year, during the Haj, the world witnesses the wonderful spectacle of this international Exhibition of Islam in leveling all distinctions of race, color and rank. Not only the Europeans, the African, the Arabian, the Persian, the Indians, the Chinese all meet together in Medina as members of one divine family, but they are clad in one dress every person in two simple pieces of white seamless cloth, one piece round the loin the other piece over the shoulders, bare head without pomp or ceremony, repeating "Here am I O God; at thy

command; thou art one and alone; Here am I." Thus there remains nothing to differentiate the high from the low and every pilgrim carries home the impression of the international significance of Islam.

In the opinion of Prof. Hurgronje "the league of nations founded by prophet of Islam put the principle of international unity of human brotherhood on such Universal foundations as to show candle to other nations." In the words of same Professor "the fact is that no nation of the world can show a parallel to what Islam has done the realization of the idea of the League of Nations."

The prophet of Islam brought the reign of democracy in its best form. The Caliph Caliph Ali and the son in-law of the prophet, the Caliph Mansur, Abbas, the son of Caliph Mamun and many other caliphs and kings had to appear before the judge as ordinary men in Islamic courts. Even today we all know how the black Negroes were treated by the civilized white races. Consider the state of BILAL, a Negro Slave, in the days of the prophet of Islam nearly 14 centuries ago. The office of calling Muslims to prayer was considered to be of status in the early days of Islam and it was offered to this Negro slave. After the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet ordered him to call for prayer and the Negro slave, with his black color and his thick lips, stood over the roof of the holy mosque at Mecca called the Ka'ba the most historic and the holiest mosque in the Islamic world, when some proud Arabs painfully cried loud, "Oh, this black Negro Slave, woe be to him. He stands on the roof of holy Ka'ba to call for prayer." At that moment, the prophet announced to the world, this verse of the holy QURAN for the first time.

"O mankind, surely we have created you, families and tribes, so you may know one another. Surely, the most honorable of you with God is MOST RIGHTEOUS AMONG you. Surely, God is Knowing, Aware."

And these words of the holy Quran created such a mighty transformation that the Caliph of Islam, the purest of Arabs by birth, offered their daughter in marriage to this Negro Slave, and whenever, the second Caliph of Islam, known to history as Umar the great, the commander of faithful, saw this Negro slave, he immediately stood in reverence and welcomed him by "Here come our master; Here come our lord." What a tremendous change was brought by Quran in the Arabs, the proudest people at that time on the earth. This is the reason why Goethe, the greatest of German poets, speaking about the Holy Quran declared that, "This book will go on exercising through all ages a most potent influence." This is also the reason why George Bernard Shaw says, "If any religion has a chance or ruling over England, say, Europe, within the next 100 years, it is Islam". It is this same democratic spirit of Islam that emancipated women from the bondage of man. Sir Charles Edward Archibald Hamilton says "Islam teaches the inherent sinlessness of man. It teaches that man and woman and woman have come from the same essence, posses the same soul and have been equipped with equal capabilities for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments."

The Arabs had a very strong tradition that one who can smite with the spear and can wield the sword would inherit. But Islam came as the defender of the weaker sex and entitled women to share the inheritance of their parents. It gave women, centuries ago right of owning property, yet it was only 12 centuries later, in 1881, that England, supposed to be the cradle of democracy adopted this institution of Islam and the act was called "the married woman act", but centuries earlier, the Prophet of Islam had proclaimed that "Woman are twin halves of men. The rights of women are sacred. See that women maintained rights granted to them." Islam is not directly concerned with political and economic systems, but indirectly and in so far as political and economic affairs influence man's conduct, it does lay down some very important principles to govern economic life. According to Prof. Massignon, it maintains the balance between exaggerated opposites and has always in view the building of character which is the basis of civilization. This is secured by its law of inheritance, by an organized system of charity known as Zakat, and by regarding as illegal all anti-social practices in the economic field like monopoly, usury, securing of predetermined unearned income and increments, cornering markets, creating monopolies, creating an artificial scarcity of any commodity in order to force the prices to rise. Gambling is illegal. Contribution to schools, to places of worship, hospitals, digging of wells, opening of orphanages are highest acts of virtue. Orphanages have sprung for the first time, it is said, under the teaching of the prophet of Islam. The world owes its orphanages to this prophet born an orphan. "Good all this" says Carlyle about Mohammad. "The natural voice of humanity, of pity and equity, dwelling in the heart of this wild son of nature, speaks."

A historian once said a great man should be judged by three tests: Was he found to be of true metel by his contemporaries? Was he great enough to raise above the standards of his age? Did he leave anything as permanent legacy to the world at large? This list may be further extended but all these three tests of greatness are eminently satisfied to the highest degree in case of prophet Mohammad. Some illustrations of the last two have already been mentioned.

The first is: Was the Prophet of Islam found to be of true metel by his contemporaries?

Historical records show that all the contemporaries of Mohammad both friends and foes, acknowledged the sterling qualities, the spotless honesty, the noble virtues, the absolute sincerity and every trustworthiness of the apostle of Islam in all walks of life and in every sphere of human activity. Even the Jews and those who did not believe in his message, adopted him as the arbiter in their personal disputes by virtue of his perfect impartiality. Even those who did not believe in his message were forced to say "O Mohammad, we do not call you a liar, but we deny him who has given you a book and inspired you with a message." They thought he was one possessed. They tried violence to cure him. But the best of them saw that a new light had dawned on him and they hastened him to seek the enlightenment. It is a notable feature in the history of prophet of Islam that his nearest relation, his beloved cousin and his bosom friends, who know him most intimately, were not thoroughly imbued with the truth of his mission and were convinced of the genuineness of his divine inspiration. If these men and women, noble, intelligent, educated and intimately acquainted with his private life had perceived the slightest signs of deception, fraud, earthliness, or lack of faith in him, Mohammad's moral hope of regeneration, spiritual awakening, and social reform would all have been foredoomed to a failure and whole edifice would have crumbled to pieces in a moment. On the contrary, we find that devotion of his followers was such that he was voluntarily acknowledged as dictator of their lives. They braved for him persecutions and danger; they trusted, obeyed and honored him even in the most excruciating torture and severest mental agony caused by excommunication even unto death. Would this have been so, had they noticed the slightest backsliding in their master?

Read the history of the early converts to Islam, and every heart would melt at the sight of the brutal treatment of innocent Muslim men and women.

Sumayya, an innocent woman, is cruelly torn into pieces with spears. An example is made of "Yassir whose legs are tied to two camels and the beast were driven in opposite directions", Khabbab bin Arth is made lie down on the bed of burning coal with the brutal legs of their merciless tyrant on his breast so that he may not move and this makes even the fat beneath his skin melt. "Khabban bin Adi is put to death in a cruel manner by mutilation and cutting off his flesh piece-meal." In the midst of his tortures, being asked whether he did not wish Mohammad in his place while he was in his house with his family, the sufferer cried out that he was gladly prepared to sacrifice himself his family and children and why was it that these sons and daughters of Islam not only surrendered to their prophet their allegiance but also made a gift of their hearts and souls to their master? Is not the intense faith and conviction on part of immediate followers of Mohammad, the noblest testimony to his sincerity and to his utter self-absorption in his appointed task?

And these men were not of low station or inferior mental caliber. Around him in quite early days, gathered what was best and noblest in Mecca, its flower and cream, men of position, rank, wealth and culture, and from his own kith and kin, those who knew all about his life. All the first four Caliphs, with their towering personalities, were converts of this period.

The Encyclopedia Britannica says that "Mohammad is the most successful of all Prophets and religious personalities".

But the success was not the result of mere accident. It was not a hit of fortune. It was a recognition of fact that he was found to be true metal by his contemporaries. It was the result of his admirable and all compelling personality.

The personality of Mohammad! It is most difficult to get into the truth of it. Only a glimpse of it I can catch. What a dramatic succession of picturesque scenes. There is Mohammad the Prophet, there is Mohammad the General; Mohammad the King; Mohammad the Warrior; Mohammad the Businessman; Mohammad the Preacher; Mohammad the Philosopher; Mohammad the Statesman; Mohammad the Orator; Mohammad the reformer; Mohammad the Refuge of orphans; Mohammad the Protector of slaves; Mohammad the Emancipator of women; Mohammad the Law-giver; Mohammad the Judge; Mohammad the Saint.

And in all these magnificent roles, in all these departments of human activities, he is like, a hero..

Orphanhood is extreme of helplessness and his life upon this earth began with it; Kingship is the height of the material power and it ended with it. From an orphan boy to a persecuted refugee and then to an overlord, spiritual as well as temporal, of a whole nation and Arbiter of its destinies, with all its trials and temptations, with all its vicissitudes and changes, its lights and shades, its up and downs, its terror and splendor, he has stood the fire of the world and came out unscathed to serve as a model in every face of life. His achievements are not limited to one aspect of life, but cover the whole field of human conditions.

If for instance, greatness consist in the purification of a nation, steeped in barbarism and immersed in absolute moral darkness, that dynamic personality who has transformed, refined and uplifted an entire nation, sunk low as the Arabs were, and made them the torch-bearer of civilization and learning, has every claim to greatness. If greatness lies in unifying the discordant elements of society by ties of brotherhood and

19 charity, the prophet of the desert has got every title to this distinction. If greatness consists in reforming those warped in degrading and blind superstition and pernicious practices of every kind, the prophet of Islam has wiped out superstitions and irrational fear from the hearts of millions. If it lies in displaying high morals, Mohammad has been admitted by friend and foe as Al Amin, or the faithful. If a conqueror is a great man, here is a person who rose from helpless orphan and an humble creature to be the ruler of Arabia, the equal to Chosroes and Caesars, one who founded great empire that has survived all these 14 centuries. If the devotion that a leader commands is the criterion of greatness, the prophet's name even today exerts a magic charm over millions of souls, spread all over the world.

He had not studied philosophy in the school of Athens or Rome, Persia, India, or China. Yet, He could proclaim the highest truths of eternal value to mankind. Illiterate himself, he could yet speak with an eloquence and fervor which moved men to tears, to tears of ecstasy. Born an orphan blessed with no worldly goods, he was loved by all. He had studied at no military academy; yet he could organize his forces against tremendous odds and gained victories through the moral forces which he marshaled. Gifted men with genius for preaching are rare. Descartes included the perfect preacher among the rarest kind in the world. Hitler in his Mein Kampf has expressed a similar view. He says "A great theorist is seldom a great leader. An Agitator is more likely to possess these qualities. He will always be a great leader. For leadership means ability to move masses of men. The talents to produce ideas has nothing in common with capacity for leadership." "But", he says, "The Union of theorists, organizer and leader in one man, is the rarest phenomenon on this earth; Therein consists greatness."

In the person of the Prophet of Islam the world has seen this rarest phenomenon walking on the earth, walking in flesh and blood.

And more wonderful still is what the reverend Bosworth Smith remarks, "Head of the state as well as the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one; but, he was pope without the pope's claims, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar, without an standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue. If ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by a right divine it was Mohammad, for he had all the power without instruments and without its support. He cared not for dressing of power. The simplicity of his private life was in keeping with his public life."

After the fall of Mecca, more than one million square miles of land lay at his feet, Lord of Arabia, he mended his own shoes and coarse woolen garments, milked the goats, swept the hearth, kindled the fire and attended the other menial offices of the family. The entire town of Medina where he lived grew wealthy in the later days of his life. Everywhere there was gold and silver in plenty and yet in those days of prosperity many weeks would elapse without a fire being kindled in the hearth of the king of Arabia, His food being dates and water. His family would go hungry many nights successively because they could not get anything to eat in the evening. He slept on no soft bed but on a palm mat, after a long busy day to spend most of his night in prayer, often bursting with tears before his creator to grant him strength to discharge his duties. As the reports go, his voice would get choked with weeping and it would appear as if a cooking pot was on fire and boiling had commenced. On the very day of his death his only assets were few coins a part of which went to satisfy a debt and rest was given to a needy person who came to his house for charity. The clothes in which he breathed his last had many patches. The house from where light had spread to the world was in darkness because there was no oil in the lamp.

Circumstances changed, but the prophet of God did not. In victory or in defeat, in power or in adversity, in affluence or in indigence, he is the same man, disclosed the same character. Like all the ways and laws of God, Prophets of God are unchangeable.

An honest man, as the saying goes, is the noblest work of God, Mohammad was more than honest. He was human to the marrow of his bones. Human sympathy, human love was the music of his soul. To serve man, to elevate man, to purify man, to educate man, in a word to humanize man-this was the object of his mission, the be-all and end all of his life. In thought, in word, in action he had the good of humanity as his sole inspiration, his sole guiding principle.

He was most unostentatious and selfless to the core. What were the titles he assumed? Only true servant of God and His Messenger. Servant first, and then a messenger. A Messenger and prophet like many other prophets in every part of the world, some known to you, many not known to you. If one does not believe in any of these truths one ceases to be a Muslim. It is an article of faith.

"Looking at the circumstances of the time and unbounded reverence of his followers" says a western writer "the most miraculous thing about Mohammad is, that he never claimed the power of working miracles."

Miracles were performed but not to propagate his faith and were attributed entirely to God and his inscrutable ways. He would plainly say that he was a man like others. He had no treasures of earth or heaven.

Nor did he claim to know the secrets of that lie in womb of future. All this was in an age when miracles were supposed to be ordinary occurrences, at the beck and call of the commonest saint, when the whole atmosphere was surcharged with supernaturalism in Arabia and outside Arabia.

He turned the attention of his followers towards the study of nature and its laws, to understand them and appreciate the Glory of God. The Quran says,

“God did not create the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in play. He did not create them all but with the truth. But most men do not know.”

The world is not illusion, nor without purpose. It has been created with the truth. The number of verses inviting close observation of nature are several times more than those that relate to prayer, fasting, pilgrimage etc. all put together. The Muslim under its influence began to observe nature closely and this gave birth to the scientific spirit of the observation and experiment which was unknown to the Greeks. While the Muslim Botanist Ibn Baitar wrote on Botany after collecting plants from all parts of the world, described by Myer in his *Gesch. der Botanik*, a monument of industry, while Al Byruni traveled for forty years to collect mineralogical specimens, and Muslim Astronomers made some observations extending even over twelve years. Aristotle wrote on Physics without performing a single experiment, wrote on natural history, carelessly stating without taking the trouble to ascertain the most verifiable fact that men have more teeth than animal. Galen, the greatest authority on classical anatomy informed that the lower jaw consists of two bones, a statement which is accepted unchallenged for centuries till Abdul Lateef takes the trouble to examine a human skeleton. After enumerating several such instances, Robert Priffault concludes in his well known book *The making of humanity*, “The debt of our science to the Arabs does not consist in starting discoveries or revolutionary theories. Science owes a great more to Arabs culture; it owes its existence.” The same writer says “The Greeks systematized, generalized and theorized but patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation, experimental inquiry, were altogether alien to Greek temperament. What we call science arose in Europe as result of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of Mathematics in form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and these methods, concludes the same author, were introduced into the European world by Arabs.”

It is the same practical character of the teaching of Prophet Mohammad that gave birth to the scientific spirit, that has also sanctified the daily labors and the so called mundane affairs. The Quran says that God has created man to worship him but the word worship has a connotation of its own. God's worship is not confined to prayer alone, but every act that is done with the purpose of winning approval of God and is for the benefit of the humanity comes under its purview. Islam sanctifies life and all its pursuits provided they are performed with honesty, justice and pure intents. It obliterates the age-long distinction between the sacred and profane. The Quran says if you eat clean things and thank God for it, it is an act of worship. It is saying of the prophet of Islam that morsel of food that one places in the mouth of his wife is an act of virtue to be rewarded by God. Another tradition of the Prophet says “He who is satisfying the desire of his heart will be rewarded by God provided the methods adopted are permissible.” A person was listening to him exclaimed ‘O Prophet of God, he is answering the calls of passions, is only satisfying the craving of his heart. Forthwith came the reply, “Had he adopted an awful method for the satisfaction of his urge, he would have been punished; then why should he not be rewarded for following the right course.”

This new conception of religion that it should also devote itself to the betterment of this life rather than concern itself exclusively with super mundane affairs, has led to a new orientation of moral values. Its abiding influence on the common relations of mankind in the affairs of every day life, its deep power over the masses, its regulation of their conception of rights and duty, its suitability and adaptability to the ignorant savage and the wise philosopher are characteristic features of the teaching of the Prophet of Islam.

But it should be most carefully born in mind this stress on good actions is not the sacrifice correctness of faith. While there are various school of thought, one praising faith at the expense of deeds, another exhausting various acts to the detriment of correct belief, Islam is based on correct faith and righteous actions. Means are important as the end and ends are as important as the means. It is an organic Unity. Together they live and thrive. Separate them and both decay and die. In Islam faith can not be divorced from the action. Right knowledge should be transferred into right action to produce the right results. How often the words came in Quran — Those who believe and do good thing, they alone shall enter paradise. Again and again, not less than fifty times these words are repeated as if too much stress can not be laid on them.

Contemplation is encouraged but mere contemplation is not the goal. Those who believe and do nothing can not exist in Islam. Those who believe and do wrong are inconceivable. Divine law is the law of effort and not

21 of ideals. It chalks out for the men the path of eternal progress from knowledge to action and from action to satisfaction.

But what is the correct faith from which right action spontaneously proceeds resulting in complete satisfaction. Here the central doctrine of Islam is the Unity of God. There is no God but God is the pivot from which hangs the whole teaching and practice of Islam. He is unique not only as regards his divine being but also as regards his divine attributes.

As regards the attributes of God, Islam adopts here as in other things too, the law of golden mean. It avoids on the one hand, the view of God which divests the divine being of every attribute and rejects, on the other, the view which likens him to things material. The Quran says, On the one hand, there is nothing which is like him, on the other, it affirms that he is Seeing, Hearing, Knowing. He is the King who is without a stain of fault or deficiency, the mighty ship of His power floats upon the ocean of justice and equity. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is the Guardian over all. Islam does not stop with this positive statement. It adds further which is its most special characteristic, the negative aspects of problem. There is also no one else who is guardian over everything. He is the meander of every breakage, and no one else is the meander of any breakage. He is the restorer of every loss and no one else is the restorer of any loss what-so-ever. There is no God but one God, above any need, the maker of bodies, creator of souls, the Lord of the day of judgment, and in short, in the words of Quran, to him belong all excellent qualities.

Regarding the position of man in relation to the Universe, the Quran says:

“God has made subservient to you whatever is on the earth or in universe. You are destined to rule over the Universe.”

But in relation to God, the Quran says:

“O man God has bestowed on you excellent faculties and has created life and death to put you to test in order to see whose actions are good and who has deviated from the right path.”

In spite of free will which he enjoys, to some extent, every man is born under certain circumstances and continues to live under certain circumstances beyond his control. With regard to this God says, according to Islam, it is my will to create any man under condition that seem best to me. cosmic plans finite mortals can not fully comprehend. But I will certainly test you in prosperity as well in adversity, in health as well as in sickness, in heights as well as in depths. My ways of testing differ from man to man, from hour to hour. In adversity do not despair and do resort to unlawful means. It is but a passing phase. In prosperity do not forget God. God-gifts are given only as trusts. You are always on trial, every moment on test. In this sphere of life there is not to reason why, there is but to do and die. If you live in accordance with God; and if you die, die in the path of God. You may call it fatalism. but this type of fatalism is a condition of vigorous increasing effort, keeping you ever on the alert. Do not consider this temporal life on earth as the end of human existence. There is a life after death and it is eternal. Life after death is only a connection link, a door that opens up hidden reality of life. Every action in life however insignificant, produces a lasting effect. It is correctly recorded somehow. Some of the ways of God are known to you, but many of his ways are hidden from you. What is hidden in you and from you in this world will be unrolled and laid open before you in the next. the virtuous will enjoy the blessing of God which the eye has not seen, nor has the ear heard, nor has it entered into the hearts of men to conceive of they will march onward reaching higher and higher stages of evolution. Those who have wasted opportunity in this life shall under the inevitable law, which makes every man taste of what he has done, be subjugated to a course of treatment of the spiritual diseases which they have brought about with their own hands. Beware, it is terrible ordeal. Bodily pain is torture, you can bear somehow. Spiritual pain is hell, you will find it almost unbearable. Fight in this life itself the tendencies of the spirit prone to evil, tempting to lead you into iniquities ways. Reach the next stage when the self-accusing spirit in your conscience is awakened and the soul is anxious to attain moral excellence and revolt against disobedience. This will lead you to the final stage of the soul at rest, contented with God, finding its happiness and delight in him alone. The soul no more stumbles. The stage of struggle passes away. Truth is victorious and falsehood lays down its arms. All complexes will then be resolved. Your house will not be divided against itself. Your personality will get integrated round the central core of submission to the will of God and complete surrender to his divine purpose. All hidden energies will then be released. The soul then will have peace. God will then address you:

“O thou soul that art at rest, and retest fully contented with thy Lord return to thy Lord. He pleased with thee and thou pleased with him; So enter among my servants and enter into my paradise.”

This is the final goal for man; to become, on the, one hand, the master of the universe and on the other, to see that his soul finds rest in his Lord, that not only his Lord will be pleased with him but that he is also pleased with his Lord. Contentment, complete contentment, satisfaction, complete satisfaction, peace, complete peace.

The love of God is his food at this stage and he drinks deep at the fountain of life. Sorrow and defeat do not overwhelm him and success does not find him in vain and exulting.

The western nations are only trying to become the master of the Universe. But their souls have not found peace and rest.

Thomas Carlyle, struck by this philosophy of life writes "and then also Islam-that we must submit to God; that our whole strength lies in resigned submission to Him, whatsoever he does to us, the thing he sends to us, even if death and worse than death, shall be good, shall be best; we resign ourselves to God." The same author continues "If this be Islam, says Goethe, do we not all live in Islam?" Carlyle himself answers this question of Goethe and says "Yes, all of us that have any moral life, we all live so. This is yet the highest wisdom that heaven has revealed to our earth."

At Muhammad's own death an attempt was made to deify him, but the man who was to become his administrative successor killed the hysteria with one of the noblest speeches in religious history: If there are any among you who worshipped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you worshipped, He lives forever. [James A. Michener, *Islam The Misunderstood Religion*, In the Reader's Digest (American Edition) for May 1955, pp. 68-70.]

Conclusion

He said: "I am indeed a servant of God: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet; 019.031 "And He hath made me blessed wheresoever I be, and hath enjoined on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live; 019.032 "(He) hath made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable; 019.033 "So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)"! 019.034 Such (was) Jesus the son of Mary: (it is) a statement of truth, about which they (vainly) dispute. 019.035 It is not befitting to (the majesty of) God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! when He determines a matter, He only says to it, "Be", and it is. Al-Quran.

God forbids you not, with regards to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them; for God loveth those who are just (Qur'an, 60:8)

Adam, Abraham ,Noah, Moses ,Jesus , Muhammad were all messengers & prophets of 1 God Allah so Islam is the 1st religion & it's the last religion because God is Allah & God is forever so is God's religion which is only Islam & it is also forever. Finally Islam always existed even before Adam, Abraham ,Noah, Moses ,Jesus & Muhammad because it's the only true religion from God Allah.

Question: Does Quran mention that Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet? Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but [he is] the messenger of God and seal(last,finish,end,final) of the prophets and God has the knowledge of everything. (Quran 33:40)

Information arranged and organized BY MR.FAISAL FAHIM

PROVING THE EXISTENCE OF ALLAH (SWT) TO AN ATHEIST

by Dr. Zakir Naik

CONGRATULATING AN ATHEIST

Normally, when I meet an atheist, the first thing I like to do is to congratulate him and say, " My special congratulations to you", because most of the people who believe in God are doing blind belief - he is a Christian, because his father is a Christian; he is a Hindu, because his father is a Hindu; the majority of the people in the world are blindly following the religion of their fathers. An atheist, on the other hand, even though he may belong to a religious family, uses his intellect to deny the existence of God; what ever concept or qualities of God he may have learnt in his religion may not seem to be logical to him.

My Muslim brothers may question me, "Zakir, why are you congratulating an atheist?" The reason that I am congratulating an atheist is because he agrees with the first part of the Shahada i.e. the Islamic Creed, 'La ilaaha' - meaning 'there is no God'.

So half my job is already done; now the only part left is 'il lallah' i.e. 'BUT ALLAH' which I shall do Insha Allah. With others (who are not atheists) I have to first remove from their minds the wrong concept of God they may have and then put the correct concept of one true God.

LOGICAL CONCEPT OF GOD

My first question to the atheist will be: "What is the definition of God?" For a person to say there is no God, he should know what is the meaning of God. If I hold a book and say that 'this is a pen', for the opposite person to say, 'it is not a pen', he should know what is the definition of a pen, even if he does not know nor is able to recognise or identify the object I am holding in my hand. For him to say this is not a pen, he should at least know what a pen means. Similarly for an atheist to say 'there is no God', he should at least know the concept of God. His concept of God would be derived from the surroundings in which he lives. The god that a large number of people worship has got human qualities - therefore he does not believe in such a god. Similarly a Muslim too does not and should not believe in such false gods.

If a non-Muslim believes that Islam is a merciless religion with something to do with terrorism; a religion which does not give rights to women; a religion which contradicts science; in his limited sense that non-Muslim is correct to reject such Islam. The problem is he has a wrong picture of Islam. Even I reject such a false picture of Islam, but at the same time, it becomes my duty as a Muslim to present the correct picture of Islam to that non-Muslim i.e. Islam is a merciful religion, it gives equal rights to the women, it is not incompatible with logic, reason and science; if I present the correct facts about Islam, that non-Muslim may Inshallah accept Islam.

Similarly the atheist rejects the false gods and the duty of every Muslim is to present the correct concept of God which he shall Insha Allah not refuse.

(You may refer to my article, 'Concept of God in Islam', for more details)

QUR'AN AND MODERN SCIENCE

The methods of proving the existence of God with usage of the material provided in the 'Concept of God in Islam' to an atheist may satisfy some but not all.

Many atheists demand a scientific proof for the existence of God. I agree that today is the age of science and technology. Let us use scientific knowledge to kill two birds with one stone, i.e. to prove the existence of God and simultaneously prove that the Qur'an is a revelation of God.

If a new object or a machine, which no one in the world has ever seen or heard of before, is shown to an atheist or any person and then a question is asked, "Who is the first person who will be able to provide details of the mechanism of this unknown object? After little bit of thinking, he will reply, 'the creator of that object.' Some may say 'the producer' while others may say 'the manufacturer.' What ever answer the person gives, keep it in your mind, the answer will always be either the creator, the producer, the manufacturer or some what of the same meaning, i.e. the person who has made it or created it. Don't grapple with words, whatever answer he gives, the meaning will be same, therefore accept it.

SCIENTIFIC FACTS MENTIONED IN THE QUR'AN: for details on this subject please refer to my book, 'THE QUR'AN AND MODERN SCIENCE – COMPATIBLE OR INCOMPATIBLE?

THEORY OF PROBABILITY

In mathematics there is a theory known as 'Theory of Probability'. If you have two options, out of which one is right, and one is wrong, the chances that you will chose the right one is half, i.e. one out of the two will be correct. You have 50% chances of being correct. Similarly if you toss a coin the chances that your guess will be correct is 50% (1 out of 2) i.e. 1/2. If you toss a coin the second time, the chances that you will be correct in the second toss is again 50% i.e. half. But the chances that you will

24 be correct in both the tosses is half multiplied by half ($1/2 \times 1/2$) which is equal to $1/4$ i.e. 50% of 50% which is equal to 25%. If you toss a coin the third time, chances that you will be correct all three times is ($1/2 \times 1/2 \times 1/2$) that is $1/8$ or 50% of 50% of 50% that is 12½%.

A dice has got six sides. If you throw a dice and guess any number between 1 to 6, the chances that your guess will be correct is $1/6$. If you throw the dice the second time, the chances that your guess will be correct in both the throws is ($1/6 \times 1/6$) which is equal to $1/36$. If you throw the dice the third time, the chances that all your three guesses are correct is ($1/6 \times 1/6 \times 1/6$) is equal to $1/216$ that is less than 0.5 %.

Let us apply this theory of probability to the Qur'an, and assume that a person has guessed all the information that is mentioned in the Qur'an which was unknown at that time. Let us discuss the probability of all the guesses being simultaneously correct.

At the time when the Qur'an was revealed, people thought the world was flat, there are several other options for the shape of the earth. It could be triangular, it could be quadrangular, pentagonal, hexagonal, heptagonal, octagonal, spherical, etc. Lets assume there are about 30 different options for the shape of the earth. The Qur'an rightly says it is spherical, if it was a guess the chances of the guess being correct is $1/30$.

The light of the moon can be its own light or a reflected light. The Qur'an rightly says it is a reflected light. If it is a guess, the chances that it will be correct is $1/2$ and the probability that both the guesses i.e the earth is spherical and the light of the moon is reflected light is $1/30 \times 1/2 = 1/60$.

Further, the Qur'an also mentions every living thing is made of water. Every living thing can be made up of either wood, stone, copper, aluminum, steel, silver, gold, oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, oil, water, cement, concrete, etc. The options are say about 10,000. The Qur'an rightly says that everything is made up of water. If it is a guess, the chances that it will be correct is $1/10,000$ and the probability of all the three guesses i.e. the earth is spherical, light of moon is reflected light and everything is created from water being correct is $1/30 \times 1/2 \times 1/10,000 = 1/60,000$ which is equal to about .0017%.

The Qur'an speaks about hundreds of things that were not known to men at the time of its revelation. Only in three options the result is .0017%. I leave it upto you, to work out the probability if all the hundreds of the unknown facts were guesses, the chances of all of them being correct guesses simultaneously and there being not a single wrong guess. It is beyond human capacity to make all correct guesses without a single mistake, which itself is sufficient to prove to a logical person that the origin of the Qur'an is Divine.

CREATOR IS THE AUTHOR OF THE QUR'AN

The only logical answer to the question as to who could have mentioned all these scientific facts 1400 years ago before they were discovered, is exactly the same answer initially given by the atheist or any person, to the question who will be the first person who will be able to tell the mechanism of the unknown object. It is the 'CREATOR', the producer, the Manufacturer of the whole universe and its contents. In the English language He is 'God', or more appropriate in the Arabic language, 'ALLAH'.

QUR'AN IS A BOOK OF SIGNS AND NOT SCIENCE

Let me remind you that the Qur'an is not a book of Science, 'S-C-I-E-N-C-E' but a book of Signs 'S-I-G-N-S' i.e. a book of ayaats. The Qur'an contains more than 6,000 ayaats, i.e. 'signs', out of which more than a thousand speak about Science. I am not trying to prove that the Qur'an is the word of God using scientific knowledge as a yard stick because any yardstick is supposed to be more superior than what is being checked or verified. For us Muslims the Qur'an is the Furqan i.e. criteria to judge right from wrong and the ultimate yardstick which is more superior to scientific knowledge.

But for an educated man who is an atheist, scientific knowledge is the ultimate test which he believes in. We do know that science many a times takes 'U' turns, therefore I have restricted the examples only to

25 scientific facts which have sufficient proof and evidence and not scientific theories based on assumptions. Using the ultimate yardstick of the atheist, I am trying to prove to him that the Qur'an is the word of God and it contains the scientific knowledge which is his yardstick which was discovered recently, while the Qur'an was revealed 1400 year ago. At the end of the discussion, we both come to the same conclusion that God though superior to science, is not incompatible with it.

SCIENCE IS ELIMINATING MODELS OF GOD BUT NOT GOD

Francis Bacon, the famous philosopher, has rightly said that a little knowledge of science makes man an atheist, but an in-depth study of science makes him a believer in God. Scientists today are eliminating models of God, but they are not eliminating God. If you translate this into Arabic, it is La illaha illal la, There is no god, (god with a small 'g' that is fake god) but God (with a capital 'G').

Surah Fussilat:

"Soon We will show them our signs in the (farthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things?"
[Al-Quran 41:53]

55. Surah Ar-Rahman (The Most Gracious)



1. The Most Beneficent (Allah)!
2. Has taught (you mankind) the Qur'an (by His Mercy).
3. He created man.
4. He taught him eloquent speech.
5. The sun and the moon run on their fixed courses (exactly) calculated with measured out stages for each (for reckoning, etc.).
6. And the herbs (or stars) and the trees both prostrate.
7. And the heaven He has raised high, and He has set up the Balance.
8. In order that you may not transgress (due) balance.
9. And observe the weight with equity and do not make the balance deficient.
10. And the earth He has put for the creatures.
11. Therein are fruits, date-palms producing sheathed fruit-stalks (enclosing dates).
12. And also corn, with (its) leaves and stalk for fodder, and sweet-scented plants.
13. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?
14. He created man (Adam) from sounding clay like the clay of pottery.
15. And the jinns did He create from a smokeless flame of fire.
16. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

- 26 17. (He is) the Lord of the two easts (places of sunrise during early summer and early winter) and the Lord of the two wests (places of sunset during early summer and early winter).
18. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?
19. He has let loosed the two seas (the salt water and the sweet) meeting together.
20. Between them is a barrier which none of them can transgress.
21. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?
22. Out of them both come out pearl and coral.
23. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?
24. And His are the ships going and coming in the seas, like mountains.
25. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?
26. Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish.
27. And the Face of your Lord full of Majesty and Honour will abide forever.
28. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?
29. Whosoever is in the heavens and on earth begs of Him (its needs from Him). Every day He has a matter to bring forth (such as giving honour to some, disgrace to some, life to some, death to some, etc.)!
30. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?
31. We shall attend to you, O you two classes (jinns and men)!
32. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?
33. O assembly of jinns and men! If you have power to pass beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth, then pass (them)! But you will never be able to pass them, except with authority (from Allah)!
34. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?
35. There will be sent against you both, smokeless flames of fire and (molten) brass, and you will not be able to defend yourselves.
36. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?
37. Then when the heaven is rent asunder, and it becomes rosy or red like red-oil, or red hide.
38. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?
39. So on that Day no question will be asked of man or jinn as to his sin, (because they have already been known from their faces either white or black).
40. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?
41. The *Mujrimun* (polytheists, criminals, sinners, etc.) will be known by their marks (black faces), and they will be seized by their forelocks and their feet.
42. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?
43. This is Hell which the *Mujrimun* (polytheists, criminals, sinners, etc.) denied.

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44. They will go between it (Hell) and the boiling hot water!

45. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

46. But for him who [the true believer of Islamic Monotheism who performs all the duties ordained by Allah and His Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, and keeps away (abstain) from all kinds of sin and evil deeds prohibited in Islam and] fears the standing before his Lord, there will be two Gardens (i.e. in Paradise).

47. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

48. With spreading branches;

49. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

50. In them (both) will be two springs flowing (free)

51. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

52. In them (both) will be every kind of fruit in pairs.

53. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

54. Reclining upon the couches lined with silk brocade, and the fruits of the two Gardens will be near at hand.

55. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

56. Wherein both will be those (maidens) restraining their glances upon their husbands, whom no man or jinn *yatmithhunna* (has opened their hymens with sexual intercourse) before them.

57. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

58. (In beauty) they are like rubies and coral.

59. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

60. Is there any reward for good other than good?

61. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

62. And besides these two, there are two other Gardens (i.e. in Paradise).

63. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

64. Dark green (in colour).

65. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

66. In them (both) will be two springs gushing forth water.

67. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

68. In them (both) will be fruits, and date- palms and pomegranates.

69. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

70. Therein (gardens) will be fair (wives) good and beautiful;

71. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

73. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

74. Whom no man or jinn *yatmithhunna* (has opened their hymens with sexual intercourse) before them.

75. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

76. Reclining on green cushions and rich beautiful mattresses.

77. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinns and men) deny?

78. Blessed be the Name of your Lord (Allah), the Owner of Majesty and Honour.

19. Surah Maryam (Mary)



1. *Kaf- Ha-Ya-'Ain-Sad*.

[These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings].

2. (This is) a mention of the mercy of your Lord to His slave Zakariya (Zachariah).

3. When he called out his Lord (Allah) a call in secret,

4. Saying: "My Lord! Indeed my bones have grown feeble, and grey hair has spread on my head, And I have never been unblest in my invocation to You, O my Lord!

5. "And Verily! I fear my relatives after me, since my wife is barren. So give me from Yourself an heir,

6. "Who shall inherit me, and inherit (also) the posterity of Ya'qub (Jacob) (inheritance of the religious knowledge and Prophethood, not the wealth, etc.). And make him, my Lord, one with whom You are Well-pleased!"

7. (Allah said) "O Zakariya (Zachariah)! Verily, We give you the glad tidings of a son, His name will be Yahya (John). We have given that name to none before (him)."

8. He said: "My Lord! How can I have a son, when my wife is barren, and I have reached the extreme old age."

9. He said: "So (it will be). Your Lord says; It is easy for Me. Certainly I have created you before, when you had been nothing!"

10. [Zakariya (Zachariah)] said: "My Lord! Appoint for me a sign." He said: "Your sign is that you shall not speak unto mankind for three nights, though having no bodily defect."

11. Then he came out to his people from *Al-Mihrab* (a praying place or a private room, etc.), he told them by signs to glorify Allah's Praises in the morning and in the afternoon.

12. (It was said to his son): "O Yahya (John)! Hold fast the Scripture [the Taurat (Torah)]." And We gave him wisdom while yet a child.

13. And (made him) sympathetic to men as a mercy (or a grant) from Us, and pure from sins [i.e. Yahya (John)] and he was righteous,

29 **14.** And dutiful towards his parents, and he was neither an arrogant nor disobedient (to Allah or to his parents).

15. And *Salamun* (peace) be on him the day he was born, the day he dies, and the day he will be raised up to life (again)!

16. And mention in the Book (the Qur'an, O Muhammad ﷺ, the story of) Maryam (Mary), when she withdrew in seclusion from her family to a place facing east.

17. She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her Our *Ruh* [angel Jibrael (Gabriel)], and he appeared before her in the form of a man in all respects.

18. She said: "Verily! I seek refuge with the Most Beneficent (Allah) from you, if you do fear Allah."

19. (The angel) said: "I am only a Messenger from your Lord, (to announce) to you the gift of a righteous son."

20. She said: "How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste?"

21. He said: "So (it will be), your Lord said: 'That is easy for Me (Allah): And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us (Allah), and it is a matter (already) decreed, (by Allah).' "

22. So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a far place (i.e. Bethlehem valley about 4-6 miles from Jerusalem).

23. And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a date-palm. She said: "Would that I had died before this, and had been forgotten and out of sight!"

24. Then [the babe 'Iesa (Jesus) or Jibrael (Gabriel)] cried unto her from below her, saying: "Grieve not! Your Lord has provided a water stream under you;

25. "And shake the trunk of date-palm towards you, it will let fall fresh ripe-dates upon you."

26. "So eat and drink and be glad, and if you see any human being, say: 'Verily! I have vowed a fast unto the Most Beneficent (Allah) so I shall not speak to any human being this day.'"

27. Then she brought him (the baby) to her people, carrying him. They said: "O Mary! Indeed you have brought a thing *Fariya* (an unheard mighty thing).

28. "O sister (i.e. the like) of Harun (Aaron) [not the brother of Musa (Moses), but he was another pious man at the time of Maryam (Mary)]! Your father was not a man who used to commit adultery, nor your mother was an unchaste woman."

29. Then she pointed to him. They said: "How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?"

30. "He ['Iesa (Jesus)] said: Verily! I am a slave of Allah, He has given me the Scripture and made me a Prophet;"

31. "And He has made me blessed wheresoever I be, and has enjoined on me *Salat* (prayer), and *Zakat*, as long as I live."

32. "And dutiful to my mother, and made me not arrogant, unblest.

33. "And *Salam* (peace) be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive!"

34. Such is 'Iesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary). (it is) a statement of truth, about which they doubt (or dispute).

- 30** **35.** It befits not (the Majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son [this refers to the slander of Christians against Allah, by saying that 'Iesa (Jesus) is the son of Allah]. Glorified (and Exalted be He above all that they associate with Him). When He decrees a thing, He only says to it, "Be!" and it is.
- 36.** ['Iesa (Jesus) said]: "And verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him (Alone). That is the Straight Path. (Allah's Religion of Islamic Monotheism which He did ordain for all of His Prophets)." [Tafsir At-Tabari]
- 37.** Then the sects differed [i.e. the Christians about 'Iesa (Jesus)], so woe unto the disbelievers [those who gave false witness by saying that 'Iesa (Jesus) is the son of Allah] from the meeting of a great Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection, when they will be thrown in the blazing Fire).
- 38.** How clearly will they (polytheists and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) see and hear, the Day when they will appear before Us! But the *Zalimun* (polytheists and wrong-doers) today are in plain error.
- 39.** And warn them (O Muhammad ﷺ) of the Day of grief and regrets, when the case has been decided, while (now) they are in a state of carelessness, and they believe not.
- 40.** Verily! We will inherit the earth and whatsoever is thereon. And to Us they all shall be returned,
- 41.** And mention in the Book (the Qur'an) Ibrahim (Abraham). Verily! He was a man of truth, a Prophet.
- 42.** When he said to his father: "O my father! Why do you worship that which hears not, sees not and cannot avail you in anything?"
- 43.** "O my father! Verily! There has come to me of knowledge that which came not unto you. So follow me. I will guide you to a Straight Path.
- 44.** "O my father! Worship not *Shaitan* (Satan). Verily! *Shaitan* (Satan) has been a rebel against the Most Beneficent (Allah).
- 45.** "O my father! Verily! I fear lest a torment from the Most Beneficent (Allah) overtake you, so that you become a companion of *Shaitan* (Satan) (in the Hell-fire)." [Tafsir Al-Qurtubi]
- 46.** He (the father) said: "Do you reject my gods, O Ibrahim (Abraham)? If you stop not (this), I will indeed stone you. So get away from me safely before I punish you."
- 47.** Ibrahim (Abraham) said: "Peace be on you! I will ask Forgiveness of my Lord for you. Verily! He is unto me, Ever Most Gracious.
- 48.** "And I shall turn away from you and from those whom you invoke besides Allah. And I shall call on my Lord; and I hope that I shall not be unblest in my invocation to my Lord."
- 49.** So when he had turned away from them and from those whom they worshipped besides Allah, We gave him Ishaque (Isaac) and Ya'qub (Jacob), and each one of them We made a Prophet.
- 50.** And We gave them of Our Mercy (a good provision in plenty), and We granted them honour on the tongues (of all the nations, i.e everybody remembers them with a good praise).
- 51.** And mention in the Book (this Qur'an) Musa (Moses). Verily! He was chosen and he was a Messenger (and) a Prophet.
- 52.** And We called him from the right side of the Mount, and made him draw near to Us for a talk with him [Musa (Moses)].
- 53.** And We bestowed on him his brother Harun (Aaron), (also) a Prophet, out of Our Mercy.

- 31 54. And mention in the Book (the Qur'an) Isma'il (Ishmael). Verily! He was true to what he promised, and he was a Messenger, (and) a Prophet.
55. And he used to enjoin on his family and his people *As-Salat* (the prayers) and the *Zakat*, and his Lord was pleased with him.
56. And mention in the Book (the Qur'an) Idris (Enoch). Verily! He was a man of truth, (and) a Prophet.
57. And We raised him to a high station.
58. Those were they unto whom Allah bestowed His Grace from among the Prophets, of the offspring of Adam, and of those whom We carried (in the ship) with Nuh (Noah), and of the offspring of Ibrahim (Abraham) and Israel and from among those whom We guided and chose. When the Verses of the Most Beneficent (Allah) were recited unto them, they fell down prostrating and weeping.
59. Then, there has succeeded them a posterity who have given up *As-Salat* (the prayers) [i.e. made their *Salat* (prayers) to be lost, either by not offering them or by not offering them perfectly or by not offering them in their proper fixed times, etc.] and have followed lusts. So they will be thrown in Hell.
60. Except those who repent and believe (in the Oneness of Allah and His Messenger Muhammad ﷺ), and work righteousness. Such will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged in aught.
61. (They will enter) 'Adn (Eden) Paradise (everlasting Gardens), which the Most Beneficent (Allah) has promised to His slaves in the unseen: Verily! His Promise must come to pass.
62. They shall not hear therein (in Paradise) any *Laghw* (dirty, false, evil vain talk), but only *Salam* (salutations of peace). And they will have therein their sustenance, morning and afternoon. [See (V.40:55)].
63. Such is the Paradise which We shall give as an inheritance to those of Our slaves who have been *Al-Muttaqun* (pious and righteous persons - See V.2:2).
64. And we (angels) descend not except by the Command of your Lord (O Muhammad ﷺ). To Him belongs what is before us and what is behind us, and what is between those two, and your Lord is never forgetful,
65. Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, so worship Him (Alone) and be constant and patient in His worship. Do you know of any who is similar to Him? (of course none is similar or coequal or comparable to Him, and He has none as partner with Him). [There is nothing like unto Him and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer].
66. And man (the disbeliever) says: "When I am dead, shall I then be raised up alive?"
67. Does not man remember that We created him before, while he was nothing?
68. So by your Lord, surely, We shall gather them together, and (also) the *Shayatin* (devils) (with them), then We shall bring them round Hell on their knees.
69. Then indeed We shall drag out from every sect all those who were worst in obstinate rebellion against the Most Beneficent (Allah).
70. Then, verily, We know best those who are most worthy of being burnt therein.
71. There is not one of you but will pass over it (Hell); this is with your Lord; a Decree which must be accomplished.
72. Then We shall save those who use to fear Allah and were dutiful to Him. And We shall leave the *Zalimun* (polytheists and wrongdoers, etc.) therein (humbled) to their knees (in Hell).

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73. And when Our Clear Verses are recited to them, those who disbelieve (the rich and strong among the pagans of Quraish who live a life of luxury) say to those who believe (the weak, poor companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ who have a hard life): "Which of the two groups (i.e. believers and disbelievers) is best in (point of) position and as regards station (place of council for consultation)."

74. And how many a generation (past nations) have We destroyed before them, who were better in wealth, goods and outward appearance?

75. Say (O Muhammad ﷺ) whoever is in error, the Most Beneficent (Allah) will extend (the rope) to him, until, when they see that which they were promised, either the torment or the Hour, they will come to know who is worst in position, and who is weaker in forces. [This is the answer for the Verse No.19:73]

76. And Allah increases in guidance those who walk aright [true believers in the Oneness of Allah who fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden), and love Allah much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained)]. And the righteous good deeds that last, are better with your Lord, for reward and better for resort.

77. Have you seen him who disbelieved in Our *Ayat* (this Qur'an and Muhammad ﷺ) and (yet) says: "I shall certainly be given wealth and children [if I will be alive (again)],"

78. Has he known the unseen or has he taken a covenant from the Most Beneficent (Allah)?

79. Nay! We shall record what he says, and We shall increase his torment (in the Hell);

80. And We shall inherit from him (at his death) all that he talks of (i.e. wealth and children which We have bestowed upon him in this world), and he shall come to Us alone.

81. And they have taken (for worship) *aliha* (gods) besides Allah, that they might give them honour, power and glory (and also protect them from Allah's Punishment etc.).

82. Nay, but they (the so-called gods) will deny their worship of them, and become opponents to them (on the Day of Resurrection).

83. See you not that We have sent the *Shayatin* (devils) against the disbelievers to push them to do evil.

84. So make no haste against them; We only count out to them a (limited) number (of the days of the life of this world and delay their term so that they may increase in evil and sins).

85. The Day We shall gather the *Muttaqun* (pious - see V.2:2) unto the Most Beneficent (Allah), like a delegate (presented before a king for honour).

86. And We shall drive the *Mujrimun* (polytheists, sinners, criminals, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah, etc.) to Hell, in a thirsty state (like a thirsty herd driven down to water),

87. None shall have the power of intercession, but such a one as has received permission (or promise) from the Most Beneficent (Allah).

88. And they say: "The Most Beneficent (Allah) has begotten a son (or offspring or children) [as the Jews say: 'Uzair (Ezra) is the son of Allah, and the Christians say that He has begotten a son ['Iesa (Christ)], and the pagan Arabs say that He has begotten daughters (angels, etc.)]."

89. Indeed you have brought forth (said) a terrible evil thing.

90. Whereby the heavens are almost torn, and the earth is split asunder, and the mountains fall in ruins,

33

91. That they ascribe a son (or offspring or children) to the Most Beneficent (Allah).

92. But it is not suitable for (the Majesty of) the Most Beneficent (Allah) that He should beget a son (or offspring or children).

93. There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto the Most Beneficent (Allah) as a slave.

94. Verily, He knows each one of them, and has counted them a full counting.

95. And everyone of them will come to Him alone on the Day of Resurrection (without any helper, or protector or defender).

96. Verily, those who believe [in the Oneness of Allah and in His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ)] and work deeds of righteousness, the Most Beneficent (Allah) will bestow love for them (in the hearts of the believers).

97. So We have made this (the Qur'an) easy in your own tongue (O Muhammad ﷺ), only that you may give glad tidings to the *Muttaqun* (pious and righteous persons - See V.2:2), and warn with it the *Ludda* (most quarrelsome) people.

98. And how many a generation before them have We destroyed! Can you (O Muhammad ﷺ) find a single one of them or hear even a whisper of them?

255. Allah! *La ilaha illa Huwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither slumber, nor sleep overtake Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His Permission? He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter. And they will never compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills. His *Kursi* extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great. [This Verse 2:255 is called *Ayat-ul-Kursi*.]

112. Surah Al-Ikhlaas or At-Tauhid (The Purity)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "He is Allah, (the) One.

2. "Allah-us-Samad (The Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, He neither eats nor drinks).

3. "He begets not, nor was He begotten;

4. "And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him."

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. Whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth glorifies Allah. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

2. He it is Who drove out the disbelievers among the people of the Scripture (i.e. the Jews of the tribe of Bani An-Nadir) from their homes at the first gathering. You did not think that they would get out. And they thought that their fortresses would defend them from Allah! But Allah's (Torment) reached them from a place whereof they expected it not, and He cast terror into their hearts, so that they destroyed their own dwellings with their own hands and the hands of the believers. Then take admonition, O you with eyes (to see).

3. And had it not been that Allah had decreed exile for them, He would certainly have punished them in this world, and in the Hereafter theirs shall be the torment of the Fire.

4. That is because they opposed Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ). And whosoever opposes Allah, then verily, Allah is Severe in punishment.

5. What you (O Muslims) cut down of the palm-trees (of the enemy), or you left them standing on their stems, it was by Leave of Allah, and in order that He might disgrace the *Fasiqun* (rebellious, disobedient to Allah).

6. And what Allah gave as booty (*Fai'*) to His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) from them, for which you made no expedition with either cavalry or camelry. But Allah gives power to His Messengers over whomsoever He wills. And Allah is Able to do all things.

7. What Allah gave as booty (*Fai'*) to His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) from the people of the townships, - it is for Allah, His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ), the kindred (of Messenger Muhammad ﷺ), the orphans, *Al-Masakin* (the poor), and the wayfarer, in order that it may not become a fortune used by the rich among you. And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it), and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Severe in punishment.

8. (And there is also a share in this booty) for the poor emigrants, who were expelled from their homes and their property, seeking Bounties from Allah and to please Him. And helping Allah (i.e. helping His religion) and His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ). Such are indeed the truthful (to what they say);-

9. And those who, before them, had homes (in Al-Madinah) and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given (from the booty of Bani An-Nadir), and give them (emigrants) preference over themselves, even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful.

10. And those who came after them say: "Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.

11. Have you (O Muhammad ﷺ) not observed the hypocrites who say to their friends among the people of the Scripture who disbelieve: "(By Allah) If you are expelled, we (too) indeed will go out with you, and we shall never

35 obey any one against you, and if you are attacked (in fight), we shall indeed help you." But Allah is Witness, that they verily, are liars.

12. Surely, if they (the Jews) are expelled, never will they (hypocrites) go out with them, and if they are attacked, they will never help them. And if they do help them, they (hypocrites) will turn their backs, so they will not be victorious.

13. Verily, you (believers in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism) are more awful as a fear in their (Jews of Bani An-Nadir) breasts than Allah. That is because they are a people who comprehend not (the Majesty and Power of Allah).

14. They fight not against you even together, except in fortified townships, or from behind walls. Their enmity among themselves is very great. You would think they were united, but their hearts are divided, that is because they are a people who understand not.

15. They are like their immediate predecessors (the Jews of Bani Qainuqa', who suffered), they tasted the evil result of their conduct, and (in the Hereafter, there is) for them a painful torment;-

16. (Their allies deceived them) like *Shaitan* (Satan), when he says to man: "Disbelieve in Allah." But when (man) disbelieves in Allah, *Shaitan* (Satan) says: "I am free of you, I fear Allah, the Lord of the '*Alamin* (mankind, jinns and all that exists)!"

17. So the end of both will be that they will be in the Fire, abiding therein. Such is the recompense of the *Zalimun* (i.e. polytheists, wrong-doers, disbelievers in Allah and in His Oneness, etc.).

18. O you who believe! Fear Allah and keep your duty to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what you do .

19. And be not like those who forgot Allah (i.e. became disobedient to Allah) and He caused them to forget their own selves, (let them to forget to do righteous deeds). Those are the *Fasiqun* (rebellious, disobedient to Allah).

20. Not equal are the dwellers of the Fire and the dwellers of the Paradise. It is the dwellers of Paradise that will be successful.

21. Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, you would surely have seen it humbling itself and rending asunder by the fear of Allah. Such are the parables which We put forward to mankind that they may reflect .

22. He is Allah, than Whom there is *La ilaha illa Huwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He) the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen (open). He is the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

23. He is Allah than Whom there is *La ilaha illa Huwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He) the King, the Holy, the One Free from all defects, the Giver of security, the Watcher over His creatures, the All-Mighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. Glory be to Allah! (High is He) above all that they associate as partners with Him.

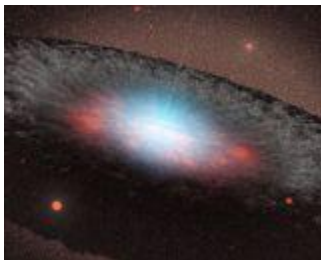
24. He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms. To Him belong the Best Names . All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.



1. I swear by the Day of Resurrection;
2. And I swear by the self-reproaching person (a believer).
3. Does man (a disbeliever) think that We shall not assemble his bones?
4. Yes, We are Able to put together in perfect order the tips of his fingers.
5. Nay! (Man denies Resurrection and Reckoning. So) he desires to continue committing sins.
6. He asks: "When will be this Day of Resurrection?"
7. So, when the sight shall be dazed,
8. And the moon will be eclipsed,
9. And the sun and moon will be joined together (by going one into the other or folded up or deprived of their light, etc.)
10. On that Day man will say: "Where (is the refuge) to flee?"
11. No! There is no refuge!
12. Unto your Lord (Alone) will be the place of rest that Day.
13. On that Day man will be informed of what he sent forward (of his evil or good deeds), and what he left behind (of his good or evil traditions).
14. Nay! Man will be a witness against himself [as his body parts (skin, hands, legs, etc.) will speak about his deeds].
15. Though he may put forth his excuses (to cover his evil deeds).
16. Move not your tongue concerning (the Qur'an, O Muhammad ﷺ) to make haste therewith.
17. It is for Us to collect it and to give you (O Muhammad ﷺ) the ability to recite it (the Qur'an),
18. And when We have recited it to you [O Muhammad ﷺ through Jibrael (Gabriel)], then follow you its (the Qur'an's) recital.
19. Then it is for Us (Allah) to make it clear to you,
20. Not [as you think, that you (mankind) will not be resurrected and recompensed for your deeds], but (you men) love the present life of this world,
21. And leave (neglect) the Hereafter.
22. Some faces that Day shall be *Nadira* (shining and radiant).
23. Looking at their Lord (Allah);

- 37 24. And some faces, that Day, will be *Basirah* (dark, gloomy, frowning, and sad),
25. Thinking that some calamity was about to fall on them;
26. Nay, when (the soul) reaches to the collar bone (i.e. up to the throat in its exit),
27. And it will be said: "Who can cure him and save him from death?"
28. And he (the dying person) will conclude that it was (the time) of departing (death);
29. And leg will be joined with another leg (shrouded)
30. The drive will be, on that Day, to your Lord (Allah)!
31. So he (the disbeliever) neither believed (in this Qur'an, in the Message of Muhammad ﷺ) nor prayed!
32. But on the contrary, he belied (this Qur'an and the Message of Muhammad ﷺ) and turned away!
33. Then he walked in full pride to his family admiring himself!
34. Woe to you [O man (disbeliever)]! And then (again) woe to you!
35. Again, woe to you [O man (disbeliever)]! And then (again) woe to you!
36. Does man think that he will be left *Suda* [neglected without being punished or rewarded for the obligatory duties enjoined by his Lord (Allah) on him]?
37. Was he not a *Nutfah* (mixed male and female discharge of semen) poured forth?
38. Then he became an '*Alaqa* (a clot); then (Allah) shaped and fashioned (him) in due proportion.
39. And made him in two sexes, male and female.
40. Is not He (Allah Who does that), Able to give life to the dead? (Yes! He is Able to do all things)

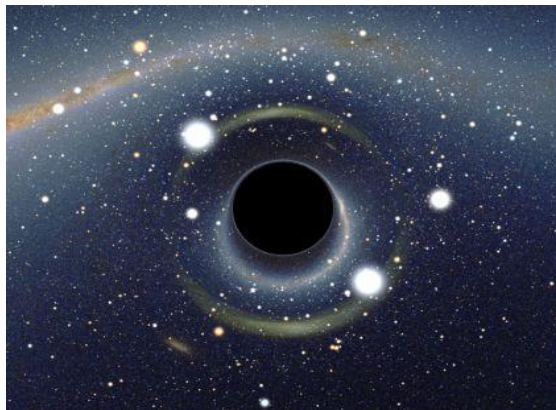
The Piercing Star and Black holes



The holy Quran is word of god. The Almighty revealed it to his final prophet to humanity. When prophets were inviting their people to the truth,

God endowed them with miracles to convince their people. Moses was given a miracle that excelled magic and dazzled magicians in ancient Egypt. Jesus was given a miracle that excelled medicine and he could cure people from incurable diseases. The only people who could see these miracles are the ones who were there. Because the prophet Muhammad was the final prophet his miracle had to be continuous and immortal, this immortal miracle is the holy Quran itself.

At the age of revealing the holy Quran Arabs were excelled in poetry and prose, so the holy Quran challenged them by its eloquence. Now miracles of the holy Quran appeared in the scientific signs mentioned in a lot of verses, these verses indicate to scientific facts which have been discovered since only few decades, So humanity must know that the holy Quran is the word of Allah. One of the scientific signs mentioned in the holy Quran is the piercing star. (1) The Almighty says in the beginning of surat Al-Tarek: (By the heaven and the Tarik (The Knocker) * Ah, what will tell thee what the Tarik (The knocker) is! * The piercing Star!) (Quran 86:1-3) These verses speak about a star which has two significant features. The first one is that it is a piercing star the other is that it knocks something hard enough to make sound. Allah (SWT) in these verses coupled His oath by heaven regarding its greatness with the piercing star which means that there is a relationship between both. The question now is How do these verses indicate to black holes? Black holes are the most violent and mysterious phenomenon in the sky. Black holes are the evolutionary endpoints of stars at least 10 to 15 times as massive as the Sun. If a star that massive or larger undergoes a supernova explosion, it may leave behind a fairly massive burned out stellar remnant. With no outward forces to oppose gravitational forces, the remnant will collapse in on itself. The star eventually collapses to the point of zero volume and infinite density, creating what is known as a "singularity". As the gravitational field is so powerful that nothing, including light, can escape its pull, the black hole has a one-way surface, called the event horizon, into which objects can fall, but out of which nothing can come out. At this we have to clarify very important point – which causes confusion to a lot of people- that we must distinguish between the event horizon of the black hole at which any matter or light can not escape and the point at which the matter of the exploded star is collapsed. If the sun become a black hole it will have an event horizon with radius about 3 km but all its matter will be condensed in a point at the center of the black hole. (General relativity describes a black hole as a region of empty space with a point like singularity at the center and an event horizon at the outer edge). (2)



The piercing star describes the matter of star condensed in singularity and the hole of empty space caused by this condensed matter.

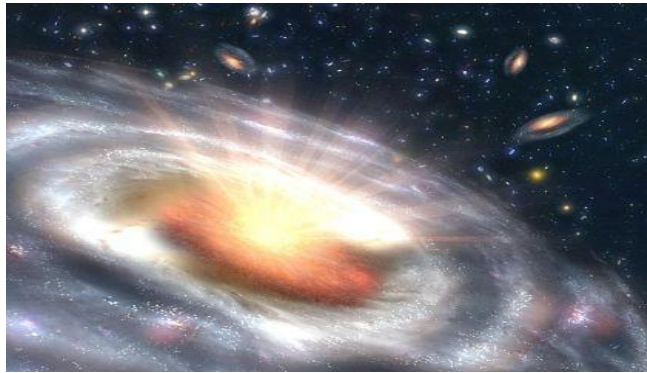
The verse indicates to the black hole The verse describes this phenomenon as the piercing star and this is more accurate description because the matter of the collapsed star which is condensed in singularity is the reason of forming the black hole. So the star itself still there condensed causing the existence of this empty space called black hole. When you describe this phenomenon as a black hole you actually are describing only the empty space but if

you describe it the piercing star, then you are describing the matter of star condensed in singularity and the hole of empty space caused by this matter.

Types of black holes There are two main types of black holes the first one is the stellar black holes and the second is actually the biggest and greatest phenomenon in the sky, it is the supermassive black holes. This confirms to us why the oath of the piercing star in the holy Quran is great enough to be coupled with the oath of heaven regarding its greatness.

The properties of supermassive black holes The most significant feature of the supermassive black hole is its mass which exceed all limits of imagination if you know that the mass of stellar black holes can reach 30 times solar mass, the mass of a supermassive black hole can reach ten billion times solar mass. It is formed also as result of collapse of the matter of supermassive star at the beginning of formation of galaxies, so the piercing star which is condensed in a tiny volume causing this supermassive black hole is considered to be the most massive star in the universe. (3)

The story begins with Quasars It has got along time for scientists to discover the supermassive black holes and the beginning was the discovery of quasars. The QUASi-stellar radio source (quasar) is a powerfully energetic and distant active galactic nucleus. The most luminous quasars radiate at a rate that can exceed the output of average galaxies, equivalent to one trillion (10¹²) suns. Scientist for along time have wondered how does a quasar produce such tremendous luminosity despite its distance from us which reaches billions of light years and the answer came from the most violent thing in sky it is the supermassive black hole. The huge luminosity of quasars results from the accretion discs of central supermassive black holes, which can convert on the order of 10% of the mass of an object into energy as compared to 0.7% for the p-p chain nuclear fusion process that dominates the energy production in sun-like stars. (4)



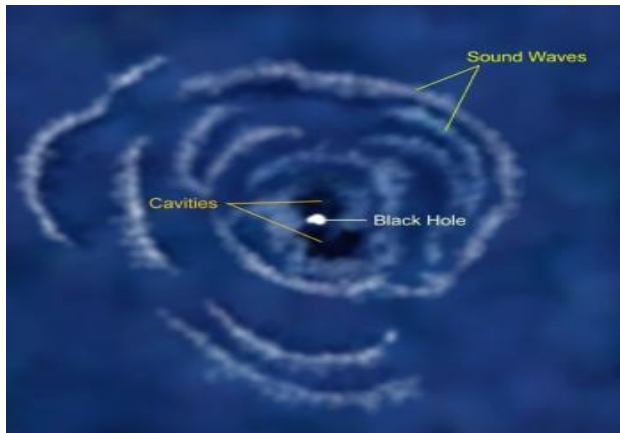
The huge luminosity of quasars results from the accretion discs of central supermassive black holes

The cosmic knocks resulted from supermassive black holes The mentioned verses (By the heaven and the Tarik (The Knocker) * Ah, what will tell thee what the Tarik (The knocker) is! * The piercing Star!) (Quran 86:1-3) stated that the piercing star which we explained its relation to supermassive black hole has another significant feature as the verses called it Al-Tarik (The knocker) so how does the piercing star and the resulted supermassive black hole knock? Part of the matter of accretion disk rotating supermassive black hole which is about to fall in the supermassive black hole is re-emitted as Relativistic jets which are extremely powerful twin jets of plasma being shot along the axis of spin of the accretion disk having a velocity approaching the speed of light. This jet knocks hardly and strongly any thing in its way and for long distances. And due to the movement of this plasma jet it knocks the interstellar and the intergalactic medium producing real sound waves.



A real jet of plasma produced by a supermassive black hole in the galaxy (M87) recorded by Hubble space telescope. It knocks every thing in its way for a distance (5000 light years).

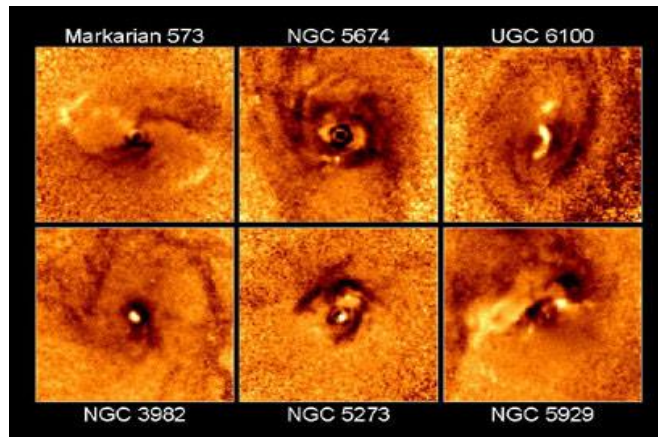
In Sept. 9, 2003: Astronomers using NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory have found, for the first time, sound waves from a supermassive black hole. This supermassive black hole resides in the Perseus cluster of galaxies located 250 million light years from Earth. The "note" is the deepest ever detected from any object in our Universe. (5)



Real sound waves resulted from jets knocking the intergalactic medium. Now imagine how great the miracle in the verses is. The piercing star and the resulted supermassive black hole knocks the intergalactic medium with relativistic jets and as result of this knocking real sound is produced. (By the heaven and the Tarik (The Knocker) * Ah, what will tell thee what the Tarik (The knocker) is! * The piercing Star!) (Quran 86:1-3) *The piercing star and heaven* Allah (SWT) in these verses coupled His oath by heaven regarding its greatness with the piercing star which means that there is a fundamental relationship between this type of stars and all what we see in the sky from stars and galaxies.

The piercing star is in the core of all galaxies Quasar and related supermassive black holes have been associated to a type of galaxies called active galaxies, but the other type of galaxies called inactive galaxies which includes our galaxy the Milky way are thought for a long time to have no supermassive black holes in their cores, but from about two decades scientists have found a method to determine the existence of supermassive black hole by determining the velocities of stars close to the galactic nuclei and they were surprised when they found a supermassive black hole in all galaxies.

What remained is to know is there a supermassive black hole in our galaxy the Milky way or not. In 2003 American astrophysicist Andrea Ghez and its teamwork (UCLA) and by using high spatial resolution imaging techniques have confirmed the existence of a supermassive black hole in our own galaxy. (6) The image is now complete each galaxy has its own supermassive black hole, but why there are active galaxies and inactive ones. The answer of this question related to the development of galaxies.



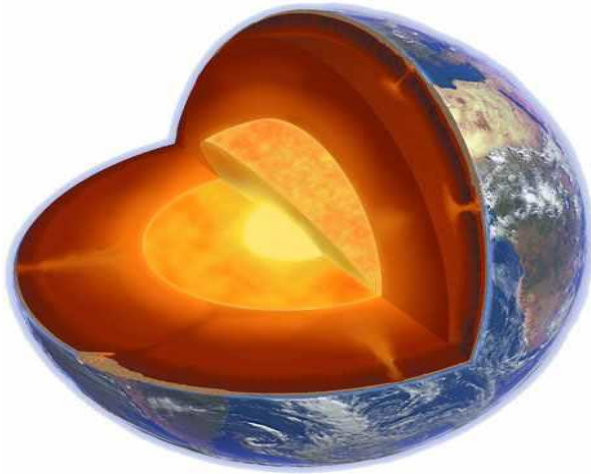
There is a supermassive black hole in each galaxy *Supermassive black hole and the birth of galaxies* Scientists have found a relationship between the velocity of stars at the edges of galaxies and the mass of the supermassive black holes in the core of these galaxies and because the distance between them are very large so this relation formed in a previous time, the time of galaxy birth as it thought that the galaxies are formed when a huge cloud of gas is collapsed at its core forming supermassive black hole which start to feed on the neighboring gas forming a quasar. This quasar triggers the formation of new stars in the entire galaxy so a new active galaxy is formed, but with time the gas start to get far from the supermassive black hole so it has nothing to feed on and the active galaxy converts to inactive one.

So science today makes a relation between the piercing star and all what we see in the sky from stars and galaxies. For this reason Allah (SWT) in these verses coupled His oath by heaven regarding its greatness with the piercing star which means that there is a fundamental relationship between this type of stars and all what we see in the sky from stars and galaxies. (By the heaven and the Tarik (The Knocker) * Ah, what will tell thee what the Tarik (The knocker) is! * The piercing Star!) (Quran 86:1-3)

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Universe By: Chem. Gamal Abdel-Nasser



The Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad is the second revealed source of Islam. Like the Quran, it contains scientific information unavailable 1400 years ago. From these miracles is the “seven” earths, mentioned by the Prophet in several of his sayings. From them are the following two: Hadith 1 It was narrated on the authority of Abu Salamah that a dispute arose between him and some other people (about a piece of land). When he told Aisha (the Prophet’s wife) about it, she said, ‘O Abu Salamah! Avoid taking the land unjustly, for the Prophet said: “Whoever usurps even one span of land of somebody, its depth through the seven earths will be collared to his neck.”’ (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, ‘Book of Oppression.’)

Hadith 2 Salim narrated on the authority of his father that the Prophet said: “Whoever takes a piece of land of others unjustly, he will sink down the seven earths on the Day of Resurrection.” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, ‘Book of Oppression.’) The aforementioned hadith prohibits oppression in general, especially the taking of a piece of land belonging to others unjustly. What might the seven earths refer to? Studies in geology have proven that the earth is composed of seven zones, identified from the inner to the outer layers as follows: (1) The Solid Inner Core of Earth: 1.7% of the Earth’s mass; depth of 5,150 - 6,370 kilometers (3,219 - 3,981 miles) The inner core is solid and unattached to the mantle, suspended in the molten outer core. It is believed to have solidified as a result of pressure-freezing which occurs to most liquids when temperature decreases or pressure increases.

(2) The Liquid Outer core: 30.8% of Earth’s mass; depth of 2,890 - 5,150 kilometers (1,806 - 3,219 miles)

The outer core is a hot, electrically conducting liquid within which convective motion occurs. This conductive layer combines with Earth’s rotation to create a dynamo effect that maintains a system of electrical currents known as the Earth’s magnetic field. It is also responsible for the subtle jerking of Earth’s rotation. This layer is not as dense as pure molten iron, which indicates the presence of lighter elements. Scientists suspect that about 10% of the layer is composed of sulfur and/or oxygen because these elements are abundant in the cosmos and dissolve readily in molten iron.

(3) The “D” Layer: 3% of Earth’s mass; depth of 2,700 - 2,890 kilometers (1,688 - 1,806 miles) This layer is 200 to 300 kilometers (125 to 188 miles) thick and represents about 4% of the mantle-crust mass. Although it is often identified as part of the lower mantle, seismic discontinuities suggest the “D” layer might differ chemically from the lower mantle lying above it. Scientists theorize that the material either dissolved in the core, or was able to sink through the mantle but not into the core because of its density.

(4) Lower Mantle: 49.2% of Earth’s mass; depth of 650 - 2,890 kilometers (406 - 1,806 miles)

The lower mantle contains 72.9% of the mantle-crust mass and is probably composed mainly of silicon, magnesium, and oxygen. It probably also contains some iron, calcium, and aluminum. Scientists make these deductions by assuming the Earth has a similar abundance and proportion of cosmic elements as found in the Sun and primitive meteorites.

(5) Middle Mantle (Transition region): 7.5% of Earth's mass; depth of 400 - 650 kilometers (250-406 miles)

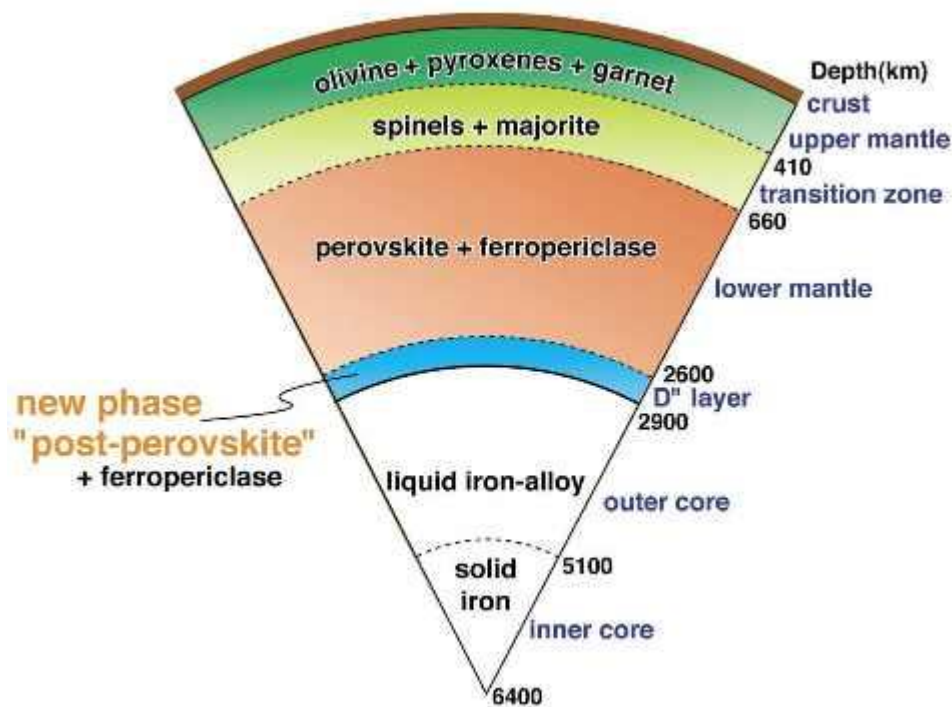
The transition region or mesosphere (for middle mantle), sometimes called the fertile layer, contains 11.1% of the mantle-crust mass and is the source of basaltic magmas. It also contains calcium, aluminum, and garnet, which is a complex aluminum-bearing silicate mineral. This layer is dense when cold because of the garnet. It is buoyant when hot because these minerals melt easily to form basalt which can then rise through the upper layers as magma.

(6) Upper Mantle: 10.3% of Earth's mass; depth of 10 - 400 kilometers (6 - 250 miles)

The upper mantle contains 15.3% of the mantle-crust mass. Fragments have been excavated for our observation by eroded mountain belts and volcanic eruptions. Olivine $(\text{Mg,Fe})_2\text{SiO}_4$ and pyroxene $(\text{Mg,Fe})\text{SiO}_3$ have been the primary minerals found in this way. These and other minerals are refractory and crystalline at high temperatures; therefore, most settle out of rising magma, either forming new material or never leaving the mantle. Part of the upper mantle called the asthenosphere might be partially molten.

(7) Lithosphere Oceanic crust: 0.099% of Earth's mass; depth of 0-10 kilometers (0 - 6 miles) The rigid, outermost layer of the Earth comprising the crust and upper mantle is called the lithosphere. The oceanic crust contains 0.147% of the mantle-crust mass. The majority of the Earth's crust was made through volcanic activity. The oceanic ridge system, a 40,000-kilometer (25,000 mile) network of volcanoes, generates new oceanic crust at the rate of 17 km³ per year, covering the ocean floor with basalt. Hawaii and Iceland are two examples of the accumulation of basalt piles.

The continental crust contains 0.554% of the mantle-crust mass. This is the outer part of the Earth composed essentially of crystalline rocks. These are low-density buoyant minerals dominated mostly by quartz (SiO_2) and feldspars (metal-poor silicates). The crust (both oceanic and continental) is the surface of the Earth; as such, it is the coldest part of our planet. Because cold rocks deform slowly, we refer to this rigid outer shell as the lithosphere (the rocky or strong layer).



Conclusion

The layers of the earth coincide with the above mentioned hadith of the Prophet. The miracle is in two matters:

- (1) The expression of the hadith, 'He will sink down the seven earths on the Day of Resurrection,' indicates the stratification of these "earths" around one center.
- (2) The accuracy with which the Prophet of Islam referred to the seven inner layers of earth. The only way for a desert dweller to have known these facts 1400 years ago is through revelation from God.

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Apostates: Should they be killed or saved?

The sections of this article are:

- 1- Who are the Apostates in Islam?
- 2- The absolute freedom of religion in Islam.
- 3- So how come Muslim Fundamentalists execute those who desert Islam then?
- 4- **My rebuttal about the historical Muslims' battles with the Apostates.**
- 5- Does Islam really mean to force someone to Islam or else kill him?
- 6- **Renowned Muslim scholars agreeing with not all apostates to be killed.**
- 7- Conclusion.

Note: Some of the notes in this article were taken from the commentary of the Noble Quran translation of Abdullah Yusuf Ali; may Allah Almighty rest his soul. Ameen.

1- Who are the Apostates in Islam?

Apostates or Renegades are those who decide to leave the religion of Islam. There is a widely prevailing misconception about this issue. It is generally thought that the Holy Quran (The Muslims Holy Scripture) provides the death sentence for those who desert the religion of Islam. There is not the least ground for such a supposition. The Holy Quran speaks repeatedly of people going back to unbelief after believing, but never once does it say that they should be killed or punished. Although the Holy Quran does provide the death sentence for some situations such as putting a murderer to death, but it never provided death sentence or ordered the death of those who leave Islam.

Let us look at Noble Verse 2:217 "They ask thee (Mohammed) Concerning fighting In the Prohibited Month. Say: Fighting therein Is a grave (offence); but graver is it In the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah, to deny Him, to prevent access to the sacred Mosque, and drive out its members. Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter. Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith if they can. And if any of you **turn back** from their faith (Islam) and die in unbelief, their works will bear no fruit in this life and in the hereafter; they will be companions of the fire and will abide therein." Here in this Holy Verse we see that Allah Almighty talks about those who leave Islam, and promises them punishment in the day of judgment. Allah Almighty doesn't order the death of those people.

Let also look at Noble Verse 5:54 "O ye who believe! If any from among you **turn back from his faith**, soon will Allah produce a people whom He (Allah) will love as they will love Him lowly with the believers, Mighty against the rejecters, fighting in the way of Allah, and never afraid of the reproachers of such as find fault. That is the Grace of Allah which He will bestow on whom He (Allah) pleaseth. And Allah encompasseth all, and He knoweth all things." Here in this Holy Verse we see again Allah Almighty strengthening the faith of the Muslims in Islam by assuring them that whenever they see Muslims leaving Islam they will also see those who join Islam with strong faith and love to Allah Almighty.

"As most men are rebellious." (5:49), it is inevitable that there should be apostates even from such a religion of reason and common-sense as Islam. In Verse 5:54 above there is a warning to the Muslims that they should not repeat the history of the Jews, and become so self-satisfied or arrogant as to depart from the spirit of Allah's teaching. If they do, the loss will be their own. Allah's bounty is not confined to one group or section of humanity. He can always raise up people who will follow the true spirit of Islam. That spirit is defined in two ways:

1- They will love Allah Almighty and Allah Almighty will love them.

2- Amongst the Brethren, their attitude will be that of humility, but to wrongdoers they will offer no compromises, and they will always strive and fight for the truth and right. They will know no fear, either physical, or that more insidious form. They are too great in mind to be haunted by any such thought.

Let us look at Noble Verse 5:55 "(O Muslims) Your (real) friends are (No less than) Allah, His Messenger, and the (Fellowship Of) Believers, those who establish regular prayers and regular charity, and they bow down humbly (in worship)." Here we see Allah Almighty telling Muslims after he warned them from apostates in (5:54) that their real friends are: Allah Almighty, Prophet Mohammed peace be upon him, and the good Muslims who keep up with their prayers and charity, and who humbly worship their God.

Let us look at Noble Verse 3:90 "**But those who reject faith after they accepted it**, and then go on adding to their defiance of faith never will their repentance be accepted; for they are those who have (of set purpose) gone astray." Here in this holy verse we see Allah Almighty rejecting the faith of those who keep coming back and forth to Islam. In order for a human being to accept Islam as his religion, he must be certain about it first. Allah Almighty's path is wide open, and his mercy is greater than this universe. This Holy Verse also does not order the death of those who leave Islam.

The path to Allah Almighty is always open and Allah Almighty will be your friend as in verse (5:55) above, and he will forgive your sins for you once you repent as in the following verse: "Except for those that repent (Even) after that, And make amends; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful." (3:89).

2- The absolute freedom of religion in Islam:

Some group of Muslims believe in killing apostates because they follow a Hadith (Saying) from Prophet Mohammed peace be upon him regarding the apostates. While Islam was weak and still growing among Jews, Christians and Pagans, Muslims did not have the full and complete religion that they needed. Some Jews and Christians wanted to take advantage of such situation to destroy Islam. They had a plan to adopt Islam first and then desert it, thus creating the impression that Islam was not a religion worth adopting.

Let us look at Noble Verse 3:72 "A section of the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) say: Believe in the morning what is revealed to the believers (Muslims), but reject it at the end of the day; perchance they may (themselves) turn back (from Islam)." To protect Islam from such Satanic attempts done by a group of the people of the book (Jews and Christians), Prophet Mohammed peace be upon him ordered the death of those who enter Islam and leave it. This temporary law that was put by our Prophet had stopped the hypocrites from the People of the Book who carried so much hatred toward Islam to enter Islam and desert it afterwards.

Allah Almighty ordered the Muslims to kill the pagans who fought against the Muslims. The following Noble Verse talks about all of the enemies who fought the Muslims long and bloody battles:

Let us look at Noble Verse 2:191 "And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have Turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith." The killing of the pagans who fought the Muslims during the time when Islam was not yet complete was essential.

Important Note: Noble Verse 2:191 above is not dedicated to the apostates as some Muslims use it to prove that the Noble Quran orders the killing of apostates. In fact, it doesn't even mention the apostates. It talks in general about slaying the pagans who declare wars on the Muslims. The pagans would obviously include the apostates who deserted Islam, but the Noble Verse certainly doesn't DIRECTLY order the killing of anyone who deserts Islam.

Allah Almighty promised that He will protect the Noble Quran from any corruption:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption). (The Noble Quran, 15:9)"

"Nay, this is a Glorious Quran, (inscribed) in a Tablet Preserved! (The Noble Quran, 85:21-22)"

Let us look at Noble Verse 5:3 ".....This day those who reject faith given up all hope of your religion: Yet fear them not But fear Me (Allah). **This day have I (Allah) perfected your religion for you**, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your (complete) religion....". So long as Islam was not organized, with its own

community and its own laws, the unbelievers and the Hypocrites from the People of the Book and the Pagan Arabs had hoped to wean the believers from the new teaching. Now that hope is gone forever with the complete organization of Islam.

Let us look at Noble Verses 15:2-3 "Again and again will those who disbelieve, wish that they had bowed (to God's will) in Islam. **Leave them alone**, to enjoy (the good things of this life) and to please themselves: let (false) hope amuse them: soon will knowledge (undeceive them)."

Let us look at Noble Verses 10:99-100 "If it had been thy Lord's will, they would all have believed, all who are on earth! wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe! **No soul can believe, except by the will of God**, and He will place doubt (or obscurity) on those who will not understand."

Let us look at Noble Verse 18:29 "Say, 'The truth is from your Lord': **Let him who will believe, and let him who will, reject (it)**: for the wrong doers We have prepared a Fire whose (smoke and flames), like the walls and roof of a tent, will hem them in: if they implore relief they will be granted water like melted brass, that will scald their faces, how dreadful the drink! How uncomfortable a couch to recline on!"

Let us look at Noble Verse 27:92 "And to rehearse the Qur'an: and if any accept guidance, they do it for the good of their own souls, and if any stray, say: **'I am only a Warner.'**"

Let us look at Noble Verse 10:99 "If it had been thy Lord's will, they would all have believed,- all who are on earth! **wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!**" Allah Almighty doesn't like us to compel people into belief.

"No soul can believe, except by the will of God, and He will place doubt (or obscurity) on those who will not understand. (The Noble Quran, 10:100)" Allah Almighty helps those whom He likes to be guided to His Straight Path. If anyone doesn't believe, or reverts back from Islam, it is then his loss and it is the Will of Allah Almighty.

"Say: 'Behold all that is in the heavens and on earth'; but neither Signs nor Warners profit those who believe not. Do they then expect (any thing) but (what happened in) the days of the men who passed away before them? **Say: 'Wait ye then: for I, too, will wait with you.'** (The Noble Quran, 10:101-102)" Notice how Allah Almighty orders us to say "Wait" to those who reject Islam. This clearly says that we can't force anyone into Islam, or punish anyone for leaving Islam.

Let us look at Noble Verse 10:108 "Say: 'O ye men! Now Truth hath reached you from your Lord! those who receive guidance, do so for the good of their own souls; those who stray, do so to their own loss: **and I am not (set) over you to arrange your affairs.**'" Whoever believes benefits his soul and whoever doesn't, harms it, and Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him is not in charge of people to arrange their affairs. Only Allah Almighty is.

"Say: 'Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger: but if ye turn away, he is only responsible for the duty placed on him and ye for that placed on you. If ye obey him, ye shall be on right guidance. **The Messenger's duty is only to preach the clear (Message).** (The Noble Quran, 24:54)" Prophet Muhammad's duty was only to preach.

"Those who pervert the Truth in Our Signs are not hidden from Us. Which is better? he that is cast into the Fire, or he that comes safe through, on the Day of Judgement? **Do what ye will:** Verily He seeth (clearly) all that ye do. (The Noble Quran, 41:40)" Here we clearly see Allah Almighty giving a freedom of choice for people to choose or refuse Islam.

"And those who take as protectors others besides Him - Allah doth watch over them; and **thou art not the disposer of their affairs.** (The Noble Quran, 42:6)" Again, Allah Almighty here told Prophet Muhammad that he has no authority over those who reject Islam.

"It is true thou wilt not be able to guide every one whom thou lovest; **but Allah Guides those whom He will and He Knows those who receive guidance.** (The Noble Quran, 28:56)" Again, no authority to Prophet Muhammad over those who accept or reject Islam.

Let us look at Noble Verse 2:256 "**Let there be no compulsion in religion:** Truth stands out clear from error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things." The Holy Quran prohibits Muslims to force any person into Islam. Muslims must not let people resent Islam and Muslims. They must leave people decide for themselves because the "Truth stands out clear from error" (2:256).

Compulsion is incompatible with religion: Because (1) religion depends upon faith and will, and these would be meaningless by force; (2) Truth and Error have been so clearly shown up by the mercy of Allah Almighty that there should be no doubt in the minds of any persons of good will as to the fundamentals of faith; (3) Allah Almighty's protection is continuous, and His Plan is always to lead us from the depths of darkness into the clearest light.

The following was sent to me from "Vipor Poison"; may Allah Almighty always be pleased with him:

"I found another verse in the Quran that dealt with apostates. Noble Verse 4:137 "Those who believe, then reject faith, then believe (again) and (again) reject faith, and go on increasing in unbelief, - Allah will not forgive them nor guide them nor guide them on the way."

Notice that the Quran says those who reject faith and then BELIEVE and again DISBELIEVE. if a Muslim rejects faith and is then killed for doing so how will he live to again BELIEVE and then DISBELIEVE. The atmosphere of this verse is that of free will and freedom of choice to everyone. If Allah wanted he would have said something about the punishment, if there was any, of those who reject Islam after accepting it. but Allah takes this to be clearly a private matter between them and Allah.

I found many verses in the Quran that teach us NO PUNISHMENT for an apostate BUT I found no verse that says the contrary.

Here is another verse about the freedom of expression in the Quran. many translators translate this wrongly and kill the meaning of the word making it a bogus and strange statement. Noble Verse 39:18 "Those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; those are they whom Allah has guided, and those it is who are the men of understanding."

The Quran tells the Muslims to listen to every thing and follow only the best of what is said. it does not tell them to kill people if they say something that is not according to the cultural norm."

The following two sets of Noble Verses were sent to me by brother Rached Blili; may Allah Almighty always be pleased with him.

Let us look at Noble Verses 109:1-6 "Say : O ye that reject Faith! I worship not that which ye worship, Nor will ye worship that which I worship. And I will not worship that which ye have been wont to worship, Nor will ye worship that which I worship. **To you be your Way, and to me mine.**"

Let us look at Noble Verse 42:15 "Now then, for that (reason), call (them to the Faith), and stand steadfast as thou art commanded, nor follow thou their vain desires; but say: '**I believe in the Book which God has sent down; and I am commanded to judge justly between you.** God is our Lord and your Lord: for us (is the responsibility for) our deeds, and for you for your deeds. **There is no contention between us and you.** God will bring us together, and to Him is (our) Final Goal.'"

The Noble Quran in all of the above Noble Verses is crystal clear about providing freedom of religion and choice to all people, Muslims and non-Muslims.

3- So how come Muslim Fundamentalists execute those who desert Islam then?

The interpretation of those who prohibit women from education, even though Islam clearly allows education for women, and prohibit them also from driving, and oppress men by forcing them to grow beards, even though beards are NOT mandatory in Islam, doesn't mean much to me.

As we've seen above, it is quite clear, and beyond any questioning that Allah Almighty prohibited compulsion in religion and allowed the absolute freedom of religion to everyone. When Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him executed apostates, he did it because Muslims were at war time and because Islam was still partial, and Muslims needed protection from the **hypocrites** of the Jews and Christians who purposely entered Islam and deserted it later to create confusion among the Muslims as shown below in the Noble Verse.

The Sayings of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, regarding killing the renegades came when Islam was partial and the Muslims were dealing with wars all the time. So if the person wasn't with the Muslims, then he was certainly with his people, the pagans and the other non-Muslims, and he would've then had to join the evil forces to fight the Muslims. So the case back then was different than today.

I have no sympathy for those hypocrites of the Jews and Christians who got executed:

"A section of the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) say: Believe in the morning what is revealed to the believers (Muslims), but reject it at the end of the day; perchance they may (themselves) turn back (from Islam). (The Noble Quran, 3:72)"

Please read "The absolute freedom of religion in Islam" section above for more details and explanations.

Please visit [Islam prohibits forming alliance with Jews and Christians and non-Muslims.](#)

[Why do some Muslims call Americans and Westerners "Great Satan"?](#)

[What is the Wisdom of Islam?](#)

4- My rebuttal about the historical Muslims' battles with the Apostates:

According to the Islamic history, when Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him died, some of the Muslims had deserted Islam for several reasons. The biggest of those reasons was that they opposed paying the Zakah (2.5% of annual income of Islamic taxes for the poor). Keep in mind that Allah Almighty constantly Warning the Prophet and the Muslims from the hypocrites (false believers). The Arabs before Islam were used to exploiting each others. The strong ate the poor, and high interest rates were enforced on loans given to the poor to ultimately force them to sell of their cattle, sons, daughters and/or wives as slaves.

After the death of our Prophet, some of the rich hypocrites decided to join with the Pagan Arab tribes to fight the Muslims and end Islam. The leader of the apostates/renegades was Musylama Al-Kath-thab or Musylama the liar

50 in English, started his army of infidels in what we call today the country of Oman, which is more than 1,000 miles away from Mecca and Medina where the Muslims resided.

After Musylama became strong and popular and was able to gather a big amount of pagans and hypocrites to form an army, he led them to march to Mecca and Medina to fight the Muslims. When his army finally reached the mountains near Mecca, the Muslims had fought them several battles until he ultimately was killed and his army was soundly defeated.

The objection that I have with some Muslims is for the following reasons:

- 1- It was the renegades or apostates that declared the war on the Muslims. The Muslims did not start the war.
- 2- We can't use the story of Musylama Al-Kath-thab to prove that it is ok today to kill any person who deserts Islam. Musylama was not a peaceful renegade. He wanted to destroy the Muslims through war. He had to be fought and killed. We can't use him as a standard and kill all renegades, especially those in the West for instance, who might embrace Islam and then desert it later due to the overwhelming anti-Islamic media and lies.
- 3- As I proved in this article, Allah Almighty in the Noble Quran talked about the apostates several times, and not a single command exists in the Noble Quran that orders the killing of any of them.
- 4- The Sayings of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, regarding killing the renegades came when Islam was partial and the Muslims were dealing with wars all the time. As I said above, if the person wasn't with the Muslims, then he was certainly with his people, the pagans and the other non-Muslims, and he would've then had to join the evil forces to fight the Muslims. So the case back then was different than today.
- 5- Today, if a weak-hearted and easily persuaded person for instance decides to embrace Islam and then gets easily persuaded to leave Islam, and then gets easily persuaded to embrace Islam again, and then gets easily persuaded to leave it and so on, then how is it right for us to apply the things that were applied to the hypocrites and Musylama Al-Kath-thab during and after our Prophet's time to this innocent individual?
- 6- We must never forget Allah Almighty's Command that honors the freedom of religion and choice in Islam in Noble Verse 2:256 and the others as shown in this article.
- 7- Some Muslims claim that the Caliphs did not apply Noble Verse 2:256 and others to the renegades, because the Caliphs knew that these Noble Verses are not applicable to them. My response to this is that we:
 1. Don't know if the Caliphs had any choice to apply them back in the hostile environment that they existed in back then.
 2. The Caliphs are not the measuring stick that the Muslims today have to follow, especially after knowing that the Caliphs themselves did things different from each others several times before on very major Islamic issues: [1] [2].

5- Does Islam really mean to force someone to Islam or else kill him?

Please visit [Does Islam really mean to force someone to Islam or else kill him?](#)

6- Renowned Muslim scholars agreeing with not all apostates to be killed:

Emphasis below are mine.

From: "Just Flow" <just_flow11@hotmail.com>
 To: quransearch_com@yahoo.com, islam_defender@hotmail.com, sami-zaatari@hotmail.com, b_zawadi@hotmail.com, islamttd786@yahoo.com, Munir0728@yahoo.com
 Subject: Apostacy-Support from orthodox scholars, hanafi, maliki, hanbali scholars agree
 Date: Tue, 28 Mar 2006 01:29:47 +0200

There are too orthodox scholars who agree with you, i don't mean just some scholars, but famous renowned orthodox scholars, like Ibn tamiyya and the maliki scholar Abul Walid al-Baji support our stance on apostacy, therefor your article is and stance is also a right orthodox view, where no one has the right to criticize you, since renowned scholars confirmed our stance. Check the article below, let me know what you think of it, and if you would add it to the article.

Volume 4, Book 52, Number 260:

Narrated Ikrima:

Ali burnt some people and this news reached Ibn 'Abbas, who said, "Had I been in his place I would not have burnt them, as the Prophet said, 'Don't punish (anybody) with Allah's Punishment.' No doubt, I would have killed them, for the **Prophet said, 'If somebody (a Muslim) discards his religion, kill him.'**"

Many prominent scholars throughout the centuries have held the view that apostasy is not a hadd (singular for hudud = capital) offence. This view is founded on the fact that the Qur'an is completely silent on the death penalty for apostasy. In fact, freedom of religion is a fundamental tenet of Islam. In Surah al-Baqarah, 2:256, Allah explicitly states: "Let there be no compulsion in religion". This Medinan verse was revealed when some Companions asked the Prophet for permission to compel their relatives to profess Islam. It has been widely interpreted to mean that no one can be compelled to embrace Islam because religion depends upon faith and will, and this would be meaningless if induced by force. Islam itself means submission to the will of God; and the willing submission of the self to faith and belief must be attained through conviction and reason, not through coercion and duress.

Islam began by inviting and persuading people to embrace it on the merit of its rationality and truth. In Surah Yunus, 10:99, a verse revealed in Mecca at the advent of Islam, Allah says: "Had your Lord willed, everyone on earth would have believed. Do you then force people to become believers?" This and verse 2:256, together with the norm of Shari'a which affirms freedom of religion, have led many Muslim countries today to include in its Constitution an article on freedom of religion as a fundamental right.

In his book, The Punishment for Apostasy in Islam, the former Chief Justice of Pakistan, SA Rahman, noted that even though the subject of apostasy occurred no less than 20 times in the Qur'an, the Holy Book remained silent on death as a punishment. Surah An-Nisa', 4:137-138, state that "Verily, those who believe, then disbelieve, then believe again, then disbelieve, and then increase in their disbelief - Allah will never forgive them nor guide them to the path. Give to the hypocrites the tidings that there is for them a painful torment." If indeed it was Allah's intention to impose the death penalty for apostasy, then such occasion of repeated apostasy could have provoked such a punishment. But neither the first instance of apostasy, nor repeated apostasy brought about capital punishment.

Those who advocate the death penalty for apostasy based their reasoning on a hadith which proclaims, "kill whoever changes his religion". But this hadith is open to varying interpretations on several grounds.

First, this hadith is considered a weak hadith with just a single isnad (this means there is only one chain of transmission or narration) and thus according to the rules of Islamic jurisprudence, it is not enough to validate the death penalty.

Second, this hadith is also considered a general ('amm) hadith in that it is in need of specification (takhsis); for it would otherwise convey a meaning that is not within its purpose. The obvious reading of the hadith would, for example, make liable the death punishment on a Hindu or Christian who converts to Islam. This is obviously not the intention of the hadith. According to the rules of Islamic jurisprudence, when a text is interpreted once, it becomes open to further interpretation and specification. Therefore, many scholars interpret this hadith to apply only to cases of high treason (hirabah), which means declaring war against Islam, the Prophet, or God or the legitimate leadership of the ummah.

Third, and most importantly, there is no evidence to show that Prophet Muhammad saw or his Companions ever compelled anyone to embrace Islam, nor did they sentence anyone to death solely for renunciation of the faith.

Based on these three reasons and the Qur'anic principle of freedom of religion, prominent ulama (scholars) from the seventh to the twentieth centuries have come out with the position that there can be no death penalty for apostasy. According to Professor Hashim Kamali in his award-winning book, *Freedom of Expression in Islam*, two leading jurists of the generation succeeding the Companions, Ibrahim al-Nakha'i and Sufyan al-Thawri, both held that the apostate should be re-invited to Islam, but should never be condemned to death. The renowned Hanafi jurist, Shams al-Din al-Sarakhsi wrote that even though renunciation of faith is the greatest of offences, it is a matter between man and his Creator, and its punishment is postponed to the Day of Judgement. The Maliki jurist Abul Walid al-Baji and the renowned Hanbali jurist Ibn Taymiyyah have both held that apostasy is a sin which carries no hadd punishment.

In modern times, the celebrated Sheikh of al-Azhar University, the late Mahmud Shaltut who was esteemed for his vast knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence and Qur'anic interpretation, wrote that many ulama are in agreement that hudud cannot be established by a solitary hadith and that unbelief by itself does not call for the death penalty. The current Sheikh of al-Azhar, who was Egypt's former Grand Mufti, Dr Mohammed Sayed Tantawi, also declared that apostasy is not a capital crime.

Many scholars, including Ibn Taymiyyah, Shaltut and Tantawi, said that the death penalty was not meant to apply to a simple change of faith, but to hirabah, that is, when apostasy is accompanied by rebellion against the community and its legitimate leadership.

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7- Conclusion:

As we clearly see from the Noble Verses above, apostates are no longer to be killed in Islam. I am not here promoting apostates, but there is no reason to kill someone who doesn't deserve to be killed. Certainly if the apostate is hostile toward the Muslims and joins the enemy in a war against them, or tries to corrupt the Muslims in the Muslim lands by trying to convert them to his/her new deviant religion, then the matter becomes different. But if a Westerner today for instance embraces Islam for a while and then changes his position due to the overwhelming false anti-Islamic media, then certainly killing that person would be a grave sin and a big mistake.

(Please review these questions, it might sound offensive but it's a way to reveal the truth if you really believe in God read the Quran and bible and ask these questions to the church, priests & your self so you can find out what is truth about God & what are against the truth from God. Dont get emotional or angry but think with cool brain what is really real & the only truth of God. Dare to explore, dare to ask & dare to know. God is truth & truth is above all.Faisal)

By Abdalla S. Alothman

101 Proofs that the Quran is Not Copied from the Bible

In the Name of Allah,
the Most Compassionate,
the Ever Merciful

{Do they not then think deeply in the Qur'ân, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding it)?} [Quran 47:24]

{Nay, We fling (send down) the truth (this Qur'ân) against the falsehood (disbelief), so it destroys it, and behold, it (falsehood) is vanished. And woe to you for that (lie) which you ascribe (to Us)}. [Quran 21:18]

Time and time again, we Muslims have to endure accusations that our Qur'an is copied from the Bible. Below are 101 proofs that makes it impossible for the Qur'an to be copied from the Bible.

- 1 - Who was created first, Adam or Satan? The Quran says Satan, the Bible doesn't say anything.
- 2 - Who was created first, Adam or the Angels? The Quran says the Angels, the Bible doesn't say anything.
- 3 - Why doesn't the Bible mention that Noah had two wives, one was disobedient, and she died. And another which was saved.
- 4 - Why does the Bible say that Noah's ark is in Ararat but it was discovered in Al-Judyy, as the Quran says so?
- 5 - Why does the Bible say that God afflicted women for Eve's sin, and the Quran doesn't tell us such thing.
- 6 - Where does the Bible tell us about the story of Aad and Thamood ? The town of Thamoud has been discovered in Saudi Arabia—it's located in a place called Mada-in Saleh. And recently, the town of Aad has been discovered with the help of NASA's satellites. Check the link : <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ubar/>
- 7 - Where does the Bible mention Prophet Saleh ?
- 8 - Where does the Bible mention Prophet Huud ?
- 9 - Where does the Bible mention Prophet Shu'ayb ?
- 10 - Where does the Bible refer to Al-Khidr ?

12 - Why doesn't the Bible mention the story of the Cow that happened between Moses and the Jews.

13 - Where do you find in the Quran any reference to Hosea, Malachi, Micha, Jude, Nahum, Nehemiah, Obadaiah, Esther, Joel, Ruth, etc ?

14 - Why doesn't the Bible mention the story of Thul-Qarnayn.

15 - Why doesn't the Bible mention the story of the People of the Cave?.

16 - Why doesn't the Bible mention the story of Antioch in Surat Yasin?.

17 - Why does the Bible say that Jesus was crucified, and the Quran says that he was saved?

18 - Why does the Bible say that Abraham sacrificed his only begotten son, Isaac, and forgets that he had another son called Ishamael, who is older than Isaac?.

19 - Regarding the dream Joseph had in Genesis 37, why is it fulfilled in the Quran and not fulfilled in the Bible? Could it be because that Joseph's mother died before Joseph had his dream? Bad prophecy.

20 - Why is it that the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit had sex with Mary, and the Quran tells us that the Angel who visited Mary told her that she will bear a son, and he is ONLY informing her of what God has decreed?

21 - Why is it that the Bible tells us that Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, and the Quran tells us it was Pharaoh's wife?.

22 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that Lut was a pious prophet, and the Bible tells us that he had sex with his daughters?

23 - Why is it that the Quran tells us in Sura 19 and 20 that Moses was a special chosen prophet who was raised under God's supervision, and the Bible tells us that he died because he didn't disobeyed God?

24 - Why is it that the Bible says that it is written with the false pen of the scribe in Jeremiah 8:8, and the Quran tells us that it has no discrepancies?

25 - Why is it that the Bible tells us that Pharaoh did not drown, and the Quran tells us that he drowned, but Allah left his body as a sign to mankind. When they dissected Pharaoh's body, they found out that his body had too much salt inside it. You say the Quran is copied from the Bible? I say you are ignorant! Read the Quran 10:92.

26 - Why does the Bible tells us in Genesis that God had to take a walk to find Adam, and the Quran tells us that God's knowledge doesn't require that He walks?

27 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that Jesus spoke in the cradle, but the Bible knows nothing about the childhood of Jesus?

28 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that Jesus made miracles by giving life to statues made from clay?

29 - The Quran tells us that Aaron is innocent; he did not make the golden calf, but a man called Al-Samirri (A person who organizes songs and joy) made it, while the Bible tells us that Aaron made the Golden calf.

30 - why is it that the Quranic Laws state that the thief's hands should be chopped, and the laws of Moses say something else?

31 - Why does the Quran say lash the fornicators 100 times, and the Bible says stone them.

32 - Why does the Quran orders us to fast in Ramadhan and the Bible doesn't.

55 33 - Why does the Quran tells us that the inheritance share of the man is as twice as much as the woman, and the Bible has no such law?

34 - Why does the Quran tells us not to transgress in wars, and the Bible teaches us to kill every living thing including plants (Joshua 6).

35 - The Bible teaches us to kill unbelievers, and leave to ourselves YOUNG virgins who never knew a man (Numbers 31). Why isn't such thing present in the Quran?

36 - The Quran tells us to free slaves to enter heaven in Surat Al-Balad. Why doesn't the Bible say such thing?

37 - Why is Satan called a FALLEN ANGEL in the Bible, and not in the Quran?

38 – Why does the Quran tells us there are Jinn (Some are good and others are bad), but the Bible doesn't mention Jinn?

39 – Why is it that the Quran tells us to perform Hajj to Makkah, and the Bible doesn't tell us such thing?

40 – Why does the Quran tells us that Abraham and Ishmael built the Kaaba, while the Bible says no such thing?

41 - Why is it that the Bible condemns David as a murderer, and the Quran tells us that he was a pious sinless prophet?

42 - Why doesn't the Bible tell us the story of Solomon and Balkees?

43 - Why doesn't the Bible tell us that Solomon had Jinns who worked for him, and the Quran says so?

44 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that Solomon had soldiers from the Jinn and the Bible doesn't say so?

45 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that Solomon understood the speech of the birds and the Bible doesn't say so?

46 – Why is it that the Quran tells us that Solomon understood the speech of the ants and the Bible doesn't say so?

47 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that ONLY female bees get the honey, and the Bible doesn't say so?

48 – Why is it that the Quran tells us that the Quran mentions different levels in Paradise, and the Bible doesn't say so?

49 - Why is it that the Quran tells us that there is a tree in hell called Zaqqum, and the Bible doesn't say so?

50 - The Quran mentions Thal-Kifl as one of the prophets. Can you find his name in the Bible?

51 - Why is it that the Quran was finalized and approved by Prophet Mohammad (s), and the Bible was never approved by any prophet?

52 – Why didn't Mohammad make the Quran in chronological order just like the Bible? Why doesn't the Quran include the boring genealogies that are all over the Bible?

53 - Why is it that the Quran mentions Ishmael as an honorable prophet, and the Bible refers to him as the son of the slave woman (Galatians 4)?

54 - Why doesn't the Quran mention the story of the people of Tyre, while the Bible does?

55 - Why doesn't the Quran mentions the story of David and how he killed one of his enemies to marry his wife as the Bible did in I Samuel 25?

- 56 56 - Why is it that the Bible does not mention the story of David and Solomon with the sheep, and the Quran does?
- 57 - Why does the Bible mention Abraham's father by name, and the Quran mentions him by his nick?
- 58 - Why doesn't the Bible mention the story when Abraham was put into a fire by his people and the Quran does?
- 59 - Why doesn't the Quran mention the interesting events that happened to Abraham in Egypt? (See BONUS #15 for one amazing example.)
- 60 - Why is it that the Bible tells us that John's mother was the daughter of Aaron, and the Quran doesn't say so?
- 61 - Why doesn't the Bible mention the story of how Mary was raised, and the Quran does?
- 62 - Why doesn't the Quran and the Bible have the same story about the birth of Jesus? The Quran says that he was born under the remnants of a palm tree, but the Bible says he was born in a stable.
- 63 - According to the Bible, who are the Sabians?
- 64 - Where does the Bible mention the Magians?
- 65 - In Genesis, the Bible tells us that Jacob had a fight with God, and the Quran tells us in Surat Al-Baqara that whoever takes the Angels as enemies, he becomes an enemy of God. Why do we see this contradiction? Moreover, why didn't Mohammad (s) tell us that Jacob wrestled with God?
- 66 - Why is it that the Quran tells us in Surat Taaha that the staff of Moses became a REAL snake, and the Bible tells us that it only appeared to be a snake?
- 67 - Why is it that Moses was the one who threw his staff during the contest with the magicians, and the Bible tells us that Aaron is the one who threw it?
- 68 - The story of Moses and the bronze snake in Numbers 21 is pretty interesting. Why is it mentioned in the Bible and not in the Quran?
- 69 - The Quran tells us to follow a certain procedure to cleanse ourselves before prayers in 4:43. Why doesn't the Bible give us the same instructions?
- 70 - The Quran tells us that Earth is round, but the Bible tells us that the Earth is flat. Why?
- 71 - The Quran tells us about Haroot and Maroot in Surat Al-Baqara. Who are those characters according to the Bible?
- 72 - Why is the story of Gog and Magog different in the Quran and the Bible?
- 73 - The Bible tells us that Prophet Elijah was raised to God. Why doesn't the Quran say the same thing?
- 74 - The Bible tells us that Solomon had many wives. Why doesn't the Quran say the same thing?
- 75 - The Bible tells us that God RESTED after he created the world. The Quran says that nothing makes God tired. Why?
- 76 - The Quran details embryology, why doesn't the Bible?
- 77 - The Quran mentions the names of the Gods during Noah's time in Surat Nuuh, why aren't those names present in the Bible?
- 78 - The Bible tells us that the whole Earth was flooded, why doesn't the Quran say the same thing?

57 79 – The Quran tells us that hell has 7 doors in Surat Al-Hijr (Ch. 15), why doesn't the Bible mention such thing?

80 - Why does the Quran say that Lot's wife was a bad woman, but God punishes Lot's wife in the Bible just for accidentally turning back to see what was happening in Sodom?

81 - Why does the Bible accuse Noah for getting drunk in Genesis 9, and the Quran frees him from such accusation?

82 - Anyone who curses his mother shall be put to death, according to Leviticus 20, why don't we find such a law in the Quran?

83 - Why is it that apostates are killed according to the Bible, and not killed according to the Quran?
See <http://www.systemoflife.com/answering-islamophobes/abul-kasem/235-refuting-muhammad-said-death-converting-to-other-religion>

84 – Why is it that tattoos are forbidden in the Bible (Leviticus 19), and no tattoos are mentioned in the Quran?

85 – The Quran instructs us to treat those who are born from an illegal sexual intercourse as Brothers. But the Bible tells us in Leviticus 23 that they should NOT even enter the assembly of the Lord. Why didn't Mohammad (s) copy this beautiful law?

86 – The Bible tells us in Deuteronomy 25, that if two men were beating up each other, and the wife of one of them interfered, she should have her hand chopped off. Why didn't Mohammad (s) copy this beautiful law?

87 - Why does the Bible encourage Bribery in Proverbs 17, and the Quran never encourages such thing?

88 – Why does the Bible say that wisdom is a source of sorrow in Ecclesiastes 1:18, and the Quran calls wisdom a gift in 2:269?

89 - Why does God in the Quran tells us to avoid bloodshed, and the Bible God curses the sword which doesn't do bloodshed (Jeremiah 48)?

90 - When God told Zachariah that he will have a son, Zachariah asked for a sign, and God gave him a sign in Sura 19. Does the Bible mention that sign? The Bible says that he could not speak, but it's detailed to us in the Sunnah that he was able to speak when he was praying. But, when it came to communicating with others, he did so by signs. Further more, the Bible says that Zakariyya was not able to speak because he was punished by Gabriel because he did not believe the angel, while the Quran tells us that it was a sign given to him—he asked God for a sign, and God gave him a sign, not a punishment.

91 - The Bible God in Leviticus 21 tells us that hunchbacks, dwarfs, cripples, blind people, people who are deformed or disfigured, or have damaged testicles—all those people cannot become priests. The Quran tells us that there is no difference between a man and another except in piety. Why didn't Mohammad (s) copy this BEAUTIFUL law from the Bible?

92 - Why does the Bible God in Leviticus 21 forbid priests from marrying divorced women, and the Quran doesn't say such thing?

93 - Why is it that the Bible tells the people to call a person who doesn't listen to his father or mother "stubborn and a drunkard"? The Quran does not tell us that we should call a person who is disobedient to his parents as a drunkard. Furthermore, the Biblical law is that this person should be stoned to death, but the Quran approves no such thing. Why?

94 - The Quran tells us that we are not above the Law. We must adhere to the Laws of God. But the Bible God tells the Christians in Galatians 2 that they are under no LAW!! In other words, God made all these laws, so that

58 Christians can see them and smile. Why didn't Mohammad tell his people that the Quranic laws are only for non-Muslims?

95 - The Bible God tells us that He will let us see the sex organs of the Jews, but the Quran mentions no such thing. Mohammad (s) had serious problems with the Jews, so why didn't he make fun of them with something similar with what we read in Nahum 3?

96 - In Romans 6, the Bible tells us that Jesus will never die again. But The Quran tells us that he will die and he will be raised at Judgment day. Why didn't Mohammad copy from Romans 6?

97 - The Bible teaches Christians to drink wine, the Quran forbids Muslims drinking. Why?

98 - 1 Corinthians 6 tells us that our bodies are members of Christ. The Quran tells us that our bodies belong to Allah, Christ has nothing to do with our bodies. Why didn't Mohammad (s) copy that from the Bible?

99 - In Ezekiel 20, the Bible God tells us that he wanted to decimate all the Israelites, but He didn't do so because it would hurt his reputation. In the Quran God tells us that He does indeed take away all the people if they were wrongful (Like the people of Noah, Sodom, Aad, and Thamood) if He wills.

100 - The Bible God has a beautiful punishment in Malachi 2. He threatens an Israelite that He would fill his face with feces!! In the Quran, God never says such things.

101 - The Bible says that the Original Sin was committed by Adam and Eve when they ate from the forbidden tree. The Quran tells us that the Original Sin was Satan's arrogance when he didn't obey God, when God ordered him to do So.

BONUS:

1 - The Quran tells us about an argument in 2:258 about Abraham and the King. Does the Bible have this story?

2 - The Quran handles divorce with care. A divorced woman stays in her house; a man should provide for her; a man should not return his wife to give her a hard time, etc. Does the Bible have the same laws regarding divorce as the Quran?

3 - The Quran tells us that Sins are not inherited. But, the Bible tells us that sins are inherited.

4 - The Quran tells us that God forgave Adam's sin after he ate from the forbidden tree. Does the Bible say that?

5 - The Quran tells us in Sura 36, that the sun and the moon are independent from one another. Does the Bible say such thing?

6 - In 25:53 and 55:19-20 the Quran tells us about how salty and pure water bodies mix. Does the Bible say such thing?

7 - In Islam we believe that there are signs to Judgment Day. Most of these signs are mentioned in the Sunnah, however, one interesting sign is a Beast/animal that would appear to the people and inform them of their status. We find this beast mentioned in the Quran in 27:82. Does the Bible say such thing?

8 - The Quran tells us that man and women are created from ONE SOUL. Does the Bible say that man and women are created from one soul? No, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 11:7 that man is the image and glory of God, while women are the glory of man.

59 9 - The Bible contains lots of contradictions. Why don't we find those contradictions copied in the Quran? For a list of few of the contradictions in the Bible see:
http://www.bibleislam.com/bible_contradictions.php

10 - The Quran says that one of Noah's sons was not saved from the flood because he was an unbeliever (Sura 11). Does the Bible say such thing?

11 - The Quran (10:90) tells us that Pharaoh tried to seek forgiveness from God. Does the Bible say the same thing?

12 - Ishmael, the son of Abraham, is considered a Prophet and a Messenger in the Quran. Does the Bible say that "Ishmael is a prophet"?

13 – We read in Surat Al-Nahl in the Quran, that the honey bee produces honey with different hues which is healthy and beneficial for mankind. Just recently, Apitherapy came up with a fantastic cure for arthritist and other chronic diseases—this therapy is called bee sting therapy, where the bee stings the patient and the venom would cure the pain. In addition, the Quran also says that the female bee is responsible for building the hive and collecting the honey. All that is proved by science today. I wonder which book of the Bible says such thing! Search the web for "Bee Sting Therapy" or "Apitherapy" to find out more.

14 - In the 16th verse of Surat Al-'Alaq, we read: {A lying sinful forelock!} Psychologists and neurologists have confirmed that it is in this area of the brain where morals and behavior are processed. Therefore, when someone decides to lie, this decision comes from that front part of the brain, and the Quran refers to that specific part when it refers to lying. Now, I wonder from which Bible passage did Mohammad (s) copy that from.

15 - In the book of Genesis we read the story about what happened to Abraham when he went to Egypt. The Bible tells us that he sold his honor by allowing his wife to become Pharaoh's concubine, so that he could be treated well instead of being killed. Now there is nowhere in the Quran where such accusation is attributed to Prophet Abraham. I wonder why didn't Prophet Mohammad (s) copy such thing from the Bible.

Walhamdulilahi Rabbil Alameen

Question: Does Quran mention that Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet? **Muhammad**
is not the father of any of your men, but [he is] the messenger of God and seal(last,finish,end,final) of the
prophets and God has the knowledge of everything. (Quran 33:40)

Jesus in Islam & Quran

"And mention in the Book (the Quran), Mary, when she withdrew in seclusion from her family to a place facing east. She placed a screen

(to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her a spirit from Us, (the angel Gabriel), and he appeared before her in the form of a man in all respects. She said: 'Verily, I seek refuge with the Most Gracious (God) from you, if you do fear God.' (The angel) said: 'I am only a messenger from your Lord, (to announce) to you the gift of a righteous son.' She said: 'How can I have a son, when no man hath touched me, nor am I unchaste?' He said: 'So (it will be), your Lord said That is easy for Me (God): And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us (God), and it is a matter (already) decreed (by God).'" (Quran 19:16-21)

“Indeed, the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, then He said to him: ‘Be!’ and he was.” (Quran 3:59)

Muslims, like Christians believe that Jesus performed miracles. These miracles were performed by the will and permission of God, Who has power and control over all things.

“Then will God say: ‘O Jesus the son of Mary! Recount My favor to you and to your mother. Behold! I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit (the angel Gabriel) so that you did speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. Behold! I taught you the Book and Wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel. And behold: you make out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by My leave, and you breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by My leave, and you heal those born blind, and the lepers by My leave. And behold! You bring forth the dead by My leave. And behold! I did restrain the Children of Israel from (violence to you) when you did show them the Clear Signs, and the unbelievers among them said: ‘This is nothing but evident magic.’” (Quran 5:110)

God sent all prophets with miracles specific to the nation to whom they were sent to prove the veracity of their message. These miracles were not performed of their own accord; rather, they were only manifest in their hands by God's will. The miracles performed by Jesus were no different. The Jews

were well advanced in the field of medicine, and the miracles which Jesus brought were of this nature, proving the truth of His message and in order to convince the Jews.

“They have certainly disbelieved who say, ‘God is the Messiah, the son of Mary’ while the Messiah has said, ‘O Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord...’” (Quran 5:72)

God says about the belief that Jesus is part of a “Trinity”:

“They have certainly disbelieved who say, ‘God is the third of three.’ (Rather) there is none worthy of worship except One (God). And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment. So will they not repent to God and seek His forgiveness? And God is Forgiving and Merciful. The Messiah (Jesus), son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger before whom many Messengers have passed away; and his mother adhered wholly to truthfulness, and they both ate food (as other mortals do). See how We make Our signs clear to them; and see where they are turning away!” (Quran 5:73-75)

And also:

“O People of the Book (Jews and Christians)! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, and attribute to God nothing except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only a Messenger of God, and His command that He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and in His Messengers, and do not say: ‘God is a Trinity.’ Give up this assertion; it would be better for you. For God is indeed (the only) One God. Far be it from His glory that He should have a son. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth. And God is sufficient for a guardian.” (Quran 4:171)

God deems this belief as an enormity against His Essence:

“And they say: ‘The Most Merciful (God) has taken (for Himself) a son.’ Assuredly you utter a hideous thing, whereby almost the heavens are torn, and the earth is split asunder and the mountains fall in ruins; That they ascribe unto the Most Merciful a son, when it is not suitable for (the Majesty of) the Most Merciful that He

should take a son. There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto the Most Merciful as a slave.” (Quran 19:88-93)

On the Day of Judgment, Jesus again will free himself from this false attribution. God gives us a glimpse of what he will say when he is asked about why people

worshipped him:

“And (beware the Day) when God will say, “O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, ‘Take me and my mother as deities besides God?’” He will say, ‘Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen. I said not to them except what you commanded me – to worship God, my Lord and your Lord...”” (Quran 5:116-117)

“I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:1-3)

Ascribing a son to God is in clear opposition to that principle for which He created the Creation and sent prophets. God says in the Quran:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (Quran 51:56)

He also said:

“And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, (saying), ‘Worship God and avoid all false objects of worship...”” (Quran 16:36)

“And (remember) when Jesus, son of Mary, said: ‘O Children of Israel, I am the Messenger of God sent to you, confirming the Torah (which came) before me...”” (Quran 61:6)

Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus stated:

“Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the (way of) the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

another prophet to come after him. God says:

“And when Jesus, son of Mary, said: ‘O Children of Israel! Indeed I am the messenger of God unto you, confirming that which was (revealed) before me in the Torah, and bringing good tidings of a messenger who will come after me, whose name is the Praised One.”” (Quran 61:6)

John 14:16-17: “And I will give you another Counselor to be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth.”

It was told by Jesus so it's none other than prophet Mohammad

Crucifixion

"...They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but (another) was made to resemble him to them..." (Quran 4:157)

"God lifted him up to His presence. God is Almighty, All-Wise."

(Quran 4:158) "No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another." (Quran 39:7)

"There is not one of the People of the Scripture but will believe in him (Jesus) before his death, and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them." (Quran 4: 159)

God forbids you not, with regards to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them; for God loveth those who are just (Qur'an, 60:8)

Adam, Abraham ,Noah, Moses ,Jesus , Muhammad were all messengers & prophets of 1 God Allah so Islam is the 1st religion & it's the last religion because God is Allah & God is forever so is God's religion which is only Islam & it is also forever. Finally Islam always existed even before Adam, Abraham ,Noah, Moses ,Jesus & Muhammad because it's the only true religion from God Allah.

Conclusion of the entire book He said: "I am indeed a servant of God: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet; 019.031 "And He hath made me blessed wheresoever I be, and hath enjoined on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live; 019.032 "(He) hath made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable; 019.033 "So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)"! 019.034 Such (was) Jesus the son of Mary: (it is) a statement of truth, about which they (vainly) dispute. 019.035 It is not befitting to (the majesty of) God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! when He determines a matter, He only says to it, "Be", and it is. Al-Quran. (There is no God but Allah & Adam, Abraham, Noah, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad were all messengers & prophets of 1 God. The Quran is the final testament book of God's words only. The Quran proves God exists .Jesus was born without a father. There is no doubt in the evidences of history that Muhammad & Jesus existed & they were prophets of 1 true God Allah.) 21. Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, verily, thou wouldst have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of Allah. Such are the similitudes which We propound to men, that they may reflect. 22. Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god;- Who knows (all things) both secret and open; He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. 23 .Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god;- the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory to Allah! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him. 24 .He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms (or Colours). To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names: whatever is in the heavens and on earth, doth declare His Praises and Glory: and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. {Al-Hashr- Al Quran} 1. Praise be to Allah, to Whom belong all things in the heavens and on earth: to Him be Praise in the Hereafter: and He is Full of Wisdom, acquainted with all things. 2. He knows all that goes into the earth, and all that comes out thereof; all that comes down from the

sky and all that ascends thereto and He is the Most Merciful, the Oft-Forgiving. 3 .The Unbelievers say, "Never to us will come the Hour": Say, "Nay! but most surely, by my Lord, it will come upon you;- by Him Who knows the unseen,- from Whom is not hidden the least little atom in the heavens or on earth: Nor is there anything less than that, or greater, but is in the Record Perspicuous: 4 .That He may reward those who believe and work deeds of righteousness: for such is Forgiveness and a Sustenance Most Generous." 5 .But those who strive against Our Signs, to frustrate them,- for such will be a Penalty,- a Punishment most humiliating. 6 .And those to whom knowledge has come see that the (Revelation) sent down to thee from thy Lord - that is the Truth, and that it guides to the Path of the Exalted (in might), Worthy of all praise. (Saba 34 Al-Quran)

Surah 3. The Family Of 'Imran, The House Of 'Imran(Quran) 1. A. L. M. 2. Allah. There is no god but He,-the Living, the Self-Subsisting, Eternal. **3.** It is He Who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong). **4.** Then those who reject Faith in the Signs of Allah will suffer the severest penalty, and Allah is Exalted in Might, Lord of Retribution. **5.** From Allah, verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heavens. **6.** He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases. There is no god but He, the Exalted in Might, the Wise. **7.** He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book: In it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: others are allegorical. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its hidden meanings, but no one knows its hidden meanings except Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord:" and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding. **8.** "Our Lord!" (they say), "Let not our hearts deviate now after Thou hast guided us, but grant us mercy from Thine own Presence; for Thou art the Grantor of bounties without measure. **9.** "Our Lord! Thou art He that will gather mankind Together against a day about which there is no doubt; for Allah never fails in His promise." **10.** Those who reject Faith,- neither their possessions nor their (numerous) progeny will avail them aught against Allah. They are themselves but fuel for the Fire.

[Surah Baqarah Quran]**284.** To Allah belongeth all that is in the heavens and on earth. Whether ye show what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah Calleth you to account for it. He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and punisheth whom He pleaseth, for Allah hath power over all things. **285.** The Messenger believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in Allah, His angels, His books, and His apostles. "We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His apostles." And they say: "We hear, and we obey: (We seek) Thy forgiveness, our Lord, and to Thee is the end of all journeys." **286.** On no soul doth Allah Place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray:) "Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; our Lord! Lay not on us a burden Like that which Thou didst lay on those before us; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out our sins, and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. Thou art our Protector; Help us against those who stand against faith." **Some references of the information of this book: 1)www.answering-christianity.com 2)www.islamtomorrow.com 3)http://www.irf.net/irf/comparativereligion/index.htm 4) www.peacetv.tv 5)www.whyislam.org 6)www.guideus.tv 7)www.irf.net 8) www.quranandscience.com**

Allah (swt) Says : "Invite to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Revelation and the Qur'an) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided." [Quran 16:125]

Allah also says "Who is better in speech than one who calls to Allah, works righteousness, and says: I am of those who bow in submission?" (Quran 41:33)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "If Allah guides a person through you, it is better for you than all that is on the earth." (Bukhari No. 2783 & Muslim No. 2406). Convey (my teachings) to the people even if it were a single sentence" (Sahih Bukhari, Vol.4, Hadith 667)

"Therefore listen not to the Unbelievers, but strive against them with the utmost strenuousness, with the (Qur'an)". 25.52 Quran Yet do they worship, besides Allah, things that can neither profit them nor harm them: and the disbeliever is a helper (of Evil), against his own Lord! 25.55 Quran And I have sent you only as a giver of good news and as a warner. 25.56 Say: "No reward do I ask of you for it but this: that each one who will may take a (straight) Path to his Allah." 25.57 Al-Quran

"Verily, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance, which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, they are the ones cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers."(Quran, al-Baqarah: 159) **Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "For Allah to guide one man through you is better for you than all that the sun has shined over".**
The Prophet (PBUH) has said: "Whoever guides [another] to a good deed will get a reward similar to the one who performs it."
[Saheeh Muslim]

What Do Non-Muslims Say About Muhammad?

His complete biography has been authenticated and circulated amongst scholars around the world starting while he was still alive and continuing up until today. One of the first examples we quote from is from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, as it confirms: *(Regarding Muhammad) "... a mass of detail in the early sources shows that he was an honest and upright man who had gained the respect and loyalty of others who were likewise honest and upright men."*

[Vol. 12]

Another impressive tribute to Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him is in the very well written work of Michael H. Hart, *"The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History."* He states that the most influential person in all history was Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with Jesus second. Examine his actual words:

"My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level."

[Michael H. Hart, *THE 100: A RANKING OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSONS IN HISTORY*, New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1978, page. 33.]

According to the Quran, Prophet Muhammad was the most excellent example for all of humanity. Even non-Muslim historians recognize him to be one of the most successful personalities in history. Read what the Reverend R. Bosworth-Smith wrote in *"Mohammed & Mohammedanism"* in 1946:

"Head of the state as well as the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one; but, he was pope without the pope's claims, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar, without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue. If ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by a Right Divine, it was Mohammad, for he had all the power without instruments and without its support. He cared not for dressing of power. The simplicity of his private life was in keeping with his public life."

While we are reviewing statements from famous non-Muslims about Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, consider this:

"Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?"

[Lamartine, HISTOIRE DE LA TURQUIE, Paris, 1854, Vol. II, pp. 276-277.]

And then we read what George Bernard Shaw, a famous writer and non-Muslim says:

"He must be called the Savior of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it much needed peace and happiness."

[The Genuine Islam, Singapore, Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936]

Then we found that K. S. Ramakrishna Rao, an Indian (Hindu) professor of Philosophy, in his booklet *"Muhammad the Prophet of Islam"* calls him the "perfect model for human life." Professor Ramakrishna Rao explains his point by saying:

"The personality of Muhammad, it is most difficult to get into the whole truth of it. Only a glimpse of it I can catch. What a dramatic succession of picturesque scenes. There is Muhammad the Prophet. There is Muhammad the Warrior; Muhammad the Businessman; Muhammad the Statesman; Muhammad the Orator; Muhammad the Reformer; Muhammad the Refuge of Orphans; Muhammad the Protector of Slaves; Muhammad the Emancipator of Women; Muhammad the Judge; Muhammad the Saint. All in all these magnificent roles, in all these departments of human activities, he is alike a hero."

What should we think about our prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when someone with the worldly status such as Mahatma Gandhi, speaking on the character of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, says in 'Young India':

"I wanted to know the best of one who holds today undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind... I became more than convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the 2nd volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of the great life."

English author Thomas Carlyle in his 'Heroes and Hero Worship', was simply amazed:

"How one man single handedly, could weld warring tribes and wandering Bedouins into a most powerful and civilized nation in less than two decades."

And Diwan Chand Sharma wrote in *"The Prophets of the East"*:

"Muhammad was the soul of kindness, and his influence was felt and never forgotten by those around him"

[D.C. Sharma, *The Prophets of the East*, Calcutta, 1935, pp. 12]

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was nothing more or less than a human being, but he was a man with a noble mission, which was to unite humanity on the worship of ONE and ONLY ONE GOD and to teach them the way to honest and upright living based on the commands of God. He always described himself as, 'A Servant and Messenger of God' and so indeed every action of his proclaimed to be.

Speaking on the aspect of equality before God in Islam, the famous poetess of India, Sarojini Naidu says:

"It was the first religion that preached and practiced democracy; for, in the mosque, when the call for prayer is sounded and worshippers are gathered together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and king kneel side by side and proclaim: 'God Alone is Great'... I have been struck over and over again by this indivisible unity of Islam that makes man instinctively a brother."

[S. Naidu, *Ideals of Islam*, vide *Speeches & Writings*, Madras, 1918, p. 169]

In the words of Professor Hurgonje:

"The league of nations founded by the prophet of Islam put the principle of international unity and human brotherhood on such universal foundations as to show candle to other nations." He continues, "the fact is that no nation of the world can show a parallel to what Islam has done towards the realization of the idea of the League of Nations."

Edward Gibbon and Simon Ockley, on the profession of ISLAM, writes in *"History of the Saracen Empires"*:

"I BELIEVE IN ONE GOD, AND MAHOMET, AN APOSTLE OF GOD" is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honor of the Prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtues; and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his 80 disciples within the bounds of reason and religion."[*History of the Saracen Empires*, London, 1870, p. 54]

EWolfgang Goethe, perhaps the greatest European poet ever, wrote about Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He said:

"He is a prophet and not a poet and therefore his Koran is to be seen as Divine Law and not as a book of a human being, made for education or entertainment." [Noten und Abhandlungen zum Weststlichen Dvan, WA I, 7, 32]

Part-4

The Reality of Prayer in Islam and The Muslim Prayer Book

The most important and rewardful Prayers are the 5 times obligatory prayers & the 5 times 5 prayers rewards are equal to 50 prayers and this hadith proves it: Narrated Malik bin Sasaa: The Prophet said, "While I was at the House in a state midway between sleep and wakefulness, (an angel recognized me) as the man lying between two men. A golden tray full of wisdom and belief was brought to me and my body was cut open from the throat to the lower part of the abdomen and then my abdomen was washed with Zam-zam water and (my heart was) filled with wisdom and belief. Al-Buraq, a white animal, smaller than a mule and bigger than a donkey was brought to me and I set out with Gabriel. When I reached the nearest heaven. Gabriel said to the heaven gate-keeper, 'Open the gate.' The gatekeeper asked, 'Who is it?' He said, 'Gabriel.' The gate-keeper asked, 'Who is accompanying you?' Gabriel said, 'Muhammad.' The gate-keeper said, 'Has he been called?' Gabriel said, 'Yes.' Then it was said, 'He is welcomed. What a wonderful visit his is!' Then I met Adam and greeted him and he said, 'You are welcomed O son and a Prophet.' Then we ascended to the second heaven. It was asked, 'Who is it?' Gabriel said, 'Gabriel.' It was said, 'Who is with you?' He said, 'Muhammad' It was asked, 'Has he been sent for?' He said, 'Yes.' It was said, 'He is welcomed. What a wonderful visit his is!' Then I met Jesus and Yahya (John) who said, 'You are welcomed, O brother and a Prophet.' Then we ascended to the third heaven. It was asked, 'Who is it?' Gabriel said, 'Gabriel.' It was asked, 'Who is with you?' Gabriel said, 'Muhammad.' It was asked, 'Has he been sent for?' 'Yes,' said Gabriel. 'He is welcomed. What a wonderful visit his is!' - (The Prophet added:). -There I met Joseph and greeted him, and he replied, 'You are welcomed, O brother and a Prophet!' Then we ascended to the 4th heaven and again the same questions and answers were exchanged as in the previous heavens. There I met Idris and greeted him. He said, 'You are welcomed O brother and Prophet.' Then we ascended to the 5th heaven and again the same questions and answers were exchanged as in previous heavens. There I met and greeted Aaron who said, 'You are welcomed O brother and a Prophet'. Then we ascended to the 6th heaven and again the same questions and answers were exchanged as in the previous heavens. There I met and greeted Moses who said, 'You are welcomed O brother and a Prophet.' When I proceeded on, he started weeping and on being asked why he was weeping, he said, 'O Lord! Followers of this youth who was sent after me will enter Paradise in greater number than my followers.' Then we ascended to the seventh heaven and again the same questions and answers were exchanged as in the previous heavens. There I met and greeted Abraham who said, 'You are welcomed O son and a Prophet.' Then I was shown Al-Bait-al-Ma'mur (i.e. Allah's House). I asked Gabriel about it and he said, This is Al Bait-ul-Ma'mur where 70,000 angels perform prayers daily and when they leave they never return to it (but always a fresh batch comes into it daily).' Then I was shown Sidrat-ul-Muntaha (i.e. a tree in the seventh heaven) and I saw its Nabk fruits which resembled the clay jugs of Hajr (i.e. a town in Arabia), and its leaves were like the ears of elephants, and four rivers originated at its root, two of them were apparent and two were hidden. I asked Gabriel about those rivers and he said, 'The two hidden rivers are in Paradise, and the apparent ones are the Nile and the Euphrates.' Then fifty prayers were enjoined on me. I descended till I met Moses who asked me, 'What have you done?' I said, 'Fifty prayers have been enjoined on me.' He said, 'I know the people better than you, because I had the hardest experience to bring Bani Israel to obedience. Your followers cannot put up with such obligation. So, return to your Lord and request Him (to reduce the number of prayers.)' I returned and requested Allah (for reduction) and He

made it forty. I returned and (met Moses) and had a similar discussion, and then returned again to Allah for reduction and He made it thirty, then twenty, then ten, and then I came to Moses who repeated the same advice. Ultimately Allah reduced it to five. When I came to Moses again, he said, 'What have you done?' I said, 'Allah has made it five only.' He repeated the same advice but I said that I surrendered (to Allah's Final Order)' " Allah's Apostle was addressed by Allah, "I have decreed My obligation and have reduced the burden on My slaves, and I shall reward a single good deed as if it were ten good deeds." - Sahih Al-Bukhari 4:429

Narrated Salim's father: In the life-time of the Prophet(SAW) whosoever saw a dream would narrate it to Allah's Apostle(SAW). I had a wish of seeing a dream to narrate it to Allah's Apostle (p.b.u.h) I was a grown up boy and used to sleep in the Mosque in the life-time of the Prophet. I saw in the dream that two angels caught hold of me and took me to the Fire which was built all round like a built well and had two poles in it and the people in it were known to me. I started saying, "I seek refuge with Allah from the Fire." Then I met another angel who told me not to be afraid. I narrated the dream to Hafsa who told it to Allah's Apostle(SAW). The Prophet(SAW) said, "Abdullah is a good man. I wish he prayed Tahajjud." After that „Abdullah (i.e. Salim's father) used to sleep but a little at night. [Bukhari]

Volume 1, Book 11, Number 688: Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "Martyrs are those who die because of drowning, plague, an abdominal disease, or of being buried alive by a falling building." And then he added, "If the people knew the Reward for the Zuhr prayer in its early time, they would race for it. If they knew the reward for the 'Isha' and the Fajr prayers in congregation, they would join them even if they had to crawl. If they knew the reward for the first row, they would draw lots for it." Saheeh bukhari

The Sunnah Prayer Of Fajr

1) 'A'isha (radiallahu anha) said, "The Messenger of Allah (salallahu alayhi wa sallam) was not as regular in any supererogatory (nafl) prayer as he was in the two rak'ats before Fajr." (Sahih Muslim 1:251)

2) 'A'isha (radiallahu anha) said, "I did not observe the Messenger of Allah (salallahu alayhi wa sallam) hasten towards any supererogatory (nafl) prayer as fast as he would to perform the two rak'ats before Fajr." (Sahih Muslim 1:251)

3) 'A'isha (radiallahu anha) reports that the Messenger of Allah (salallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "The two (sunnah) rak'ats of Fajr are more superior than the world and everything within it." (Sahih Muslims 1:251)

4) 'A'isha (radiallahu anha) reports that the Messenger of Allah (salallahu alayhi wa sallam) said regarding the two (sunnah) rak'ats at the break of dawn, "They are more beloved to me than the entire world." (Sahih Muslim 1:251)

5) Abu Hurayra (radiallahu anha) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (salallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "Do not abandon the sunnah rak'ats of Fajr, even if horses trample over you." (Sunan Abu Dawud 1:186, Athar al-Sunan 1:224)

Translation: Hadhrat Ka'ab Bin 'Ujrah (May Allah be well pleased with him) told Hadhrat Abdur Rahman Bin Abu Laila: Should I not give you a beautiful gift, which I heard from the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)? He said: Why not! You give me that gift. Then Hadhrat Ka'ab said: We asked the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam): How should we send Durood on your family? Allah

Most High has taught us how to greet them with Salaam. Then the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said: Say this: Allahumma Salli 'Ala (Sayyidina) Muhammadin Wa 'Ala Aali (Sayyidina) Muhammadin Kama Sallayta 'Ala (Sayyidina) Ibraheema Wa 'Ala Aali Sayyidina Ibraheema Innaka Hameedum Majeed. Allahumma Barik 'Ala (Sayyidina) Muhammadin Wa 'Ala Aali (Sayyidina) Muhammadin Kama Barakta 'Ala (Sayyidina) Ibraheema Wa 'Ala Aali Sayyidina Ibraheema Innaka Hameedum Majeed. (Sahih Bukhari, Hadith No. 3370)

Hadith No. 1

Hazrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud (r.a) narrated:

I asked the Messenger of Allah (saaw) "Which practice is most preferred by Allah (swt)?" The Messenger of Allah (saaw) replied "Offering Prayer within the prescribed time". I asked again "what is the next most preferred practice by Allah (swt)?" The Messenger of Allah (saaw) replied "to do good deeds to and for your parents". I asked again "what is the next most preferred practice by Allah (swt)?" The Messenger of Allah (saaw) replied "To struggle in the way of Allah (swt).

(Bukhari and Muslim)

Hadith No. 2

Hazrat Abu Umaamah (r.a) narrated:

"The Messenger of Allah (saaw) said "When a person stands up for prayer the doors of the Heavens will be opened for him and all the obstructions between Allah (swt) and him will be removed and the hoors (women of paradise) will be there to welcome him. However this will only last until the person praying begins to unnecessarily clear the nose and throat."

(Tabarani)

Hadith No. 3

Hazrat Abu Dhar (r.a) narrated:

"On one occasion the Messenger of Allah (saaw) went out on a winters day when leaves were falling from the trees. the Messenger of Allah (saaw) grabbed two branches of a tree and said: "Oh Abu Dhar." Abu Dhar answered "I am here Oh Messenger of Allah (saaw)" Then the messenger of Allah (saaw) said "When a person performs his prayer for the sake of Allah (swt), then his sins will fall, like the leaves fall from the branches of a tree"

(Musnad Imam Ahmad)

Hadith No. 4

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (r.a) narrated:

The Messenger of Allah (saaw) said " the person who has purified himself before attending the mosque to perform prayer, then on his first step towards the mosque, one of his sins will be deleted (from his list of deeds) and on his second step, he will be elevated to one grade higher. This deletion of sins and elevation to a higher grade will continue in sequence with each consecutive step taken."

Hadith No. 5

Hazrat Zaid bin Khalid Johani (r.a) narrated:

The Messenger of Allah (saaw) said: "Whoever offers two rakats of prayer and makes no mistakes, then whatever his previous sins, they will be forgiven (minor sins)." (Musnad Imam Ahmad)

Hadith No. 6

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (r.a) narrated the hadith whereby the Messenger of Allah (saaw):

"Between the five prayers and from one Jummah to another and from one month of Ramadan to another, all the sins committed between each period will be deleted if you avoid the graver sins" (Muslim)

Abdullah ibn Shaqiq said: "I asked Aisha about the prayer of the Prophet and she said, 'He would pray four rakat before zuhr and two after it.'" [Sahih Muslim]

In a hadith recorded by Imam Bukhari, Aisha (radi Allahu anha) said: "The Prophet never left praying four rakat before Zuhr and two rakat before Fajr under any circumstances."

"O you who believe! When you prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands (and arms) to the elbows; rub your heads (with water); and (wash) your feet to the ankles." (Al-Qur'an 5:6)

"The key to Paradise is the (stipulated) prayer. And key to prayer is cleanliness." (Ahmed)

"Purification is half of faith." (Muslim)

"Taking a bath on Friday is a must for every adult." (Bukhari)

"And establish regular prayer: for prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt." (Al-Qur'an 29:45) 5:6)

"See you not that it is Allah Whose praises all beings in the heavens and on earth do celebrate, and the birds (of the air) with wings outspread? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise" (Al-Qur'an 24:41)

"Pray as you have seen me praying." (Bukhari)
(Our intention must always be to perform salah, to the best of our ability as exemplified by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).)

"One of the best deeds is to offer salah (prayer) in its early time." (Tirmidhi)

"The key to Paradise is the (stipulated) prayer. And key to prayer is cleanliness." (Ahmed)

DIRECTION OF KA'BAH FROM VARIOUS CITIES

CHAPTER 1

'IBADAH (WORSHIP)

LONDON

NEW YORK

MOSCOW

JIBRALTAR

LAGOS

TOKYO

JAKARTA

SANTIAGO

CAPE TOWN SYDNEY

The word 'Ibadah comes from the Arabic "Abd", which means slave or servant. Man is a born subject and servant of Allah. When he turns to Allah with humility

and devotion, he performs an act of 'Ibadah. 'Ibadah is a means for purifying man's physical and spiritual life. In Islam, every good deed performed to seek the pleasure of Allah is an act of worship.

The obligatory rituals of 'Ibadah are prayers (Salah), fasting (Saum), (Zakah) charity, pilgrimage (Hajj), and struggling in the way of Allah (Jihad). These along with Iman are often called the pillars of Islam. Islam is an integral whole. It covers all aspects of man's life. The pillars unite all human activities, spiritual and material, individual and collective.

The obligatory rituals of 'Ibadah make "faith" (Iman) to play a practical and effective role in the human life. 'Ibadah is therefore something positive. It is the means by which the faithfuls can serve Allah as well as their fellow men.

The Salah, which is the subject of this booklet, is an essential part of 'Ibadah. The Prophet (S.A.W) is reported to have said: "Salah is the pillar of Islam and whosoever abandons it, demolishes the very pillar of religion".

Salah the Muslim prayer

CHAPTER 2

TAHARAH (PURIFICATION)

Before a person can say his prayer, he must be clean and pure. The Qur'an says: "Truly Allah loves those who turn to Him and those who care for cleanliness". Cleanliness of mind, of body, and of clothes is called Taharah or purification. It is only in such a condition of purification that a Muslim may perform the Salah.

Purification of the body is attained by partial or total washing with clean water. The partial wash is known as Al-Wudu or the ablution, and the total wash is called Al-Ghusl or the washing (bath of the whole body).

AL--WUDU (ABLUTION)

The process of performing Wudu is as follows:-

Mention the name of Allah by saying

الرَّحِيمِ الرَّحْمَنِ اللَّهُ بِسْمِ

"BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHEEM"

In the name of Allah, the Beneficient, the Merciful.

Wash both hands up to the wrists together three times, ensuring that every part including between the fingers is wetted by water as shown in figures 1, (a) and (b).

Figure 1(a) Figure 1(b)

Taking a handful of water into the mouth, rinse the mouth three times as shown in figure 2.

Snuff water contained in the right palm into the nose and then eject the water with the left hand (thrice) - as shown in figures 3 and 4.

Wash the face, ear to ear, forehead to chin, three times as shown in figures 5, 6 and 7.

Figure 2

Figure 3 Figure 4

Figure 5 Figure 6

Salah the Muslim prayer

Figure 7

Figure 9

Figure 8

Figure 10

Figure 11

Wash the right arm thoroughly from the wrist to the elbow three times.

Repeat the same with the left hand - as shown in figures 8 and 9.

Run moistened fingers through the ears,
the first finger of each hand going across
the outside (once) - as shown in figure 11.

If they are removed, it is necessary to re-wash the feet for Wudu. The process ends with the recitation of the Kalimatush-Shahadah:

لَهُ شَهِادَةٌ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ مُحَمَّدٌ وَأَنَّ

ASH-HADU AL-LA ILAHA ILLALLAHU WAH DAHU

LA SHAREEKA LAHU WA-ASH-HADU AN-NA

MUHAMMADAN 'ABDUHU-WA-RASULUH

A fresh performance of Wudu is necessary if one breaks wind, touches genitals, or becomes sexually excited, or pays a visit to the lavatory, or falls asleep lying down, or vomits violently, or incurs a flow of blood from an injury, or a flow of impure fluid.

Wash both feet up to the ankles starting from the right and ensuring that all parts particularly between the toes are wetted - as shown in figure 12. If you had performed complete "Wudu" before putting on your socks, it is not necessary to remove them when you want to repeat the performance of "Wudu". It is enough to wipe over the stockinged feet with wet hands. This may be done for a period of one day, (and three days on journey) on the condition that the socks are not removed. Figure 12
Salah the Muslim prayer

AL--GHUSL (THE WASHING OR BATH)

The greater purification, Ghusl, is obligatory when one is defiled as a result of nocturnal emission (or a wet dream), marital intercourse, child birth, or when entering into the fold of Islam.

The procedure is as follows:-

Begin with the name of Allah as for Wudu. Wash the hands and the affected parts of the body with water to remove any impurity. Perform Wudu as above. Then wash the whole body three times, using clean water for each wash.

AT--TAYAMMUM(DRY ABLUTION)

On certain occasions, it may become either impossible (e.g. when water cannot be found or just enough for drinking is available), or it is dangerous because of illness, to use water for Wudu or Ghusl. In such situations, Tayammum (dry ablution) is performed.

The procedure:-

Begin with the name of Allah. Strike both palms on sand, or anything containing sand or dust, like a wall or a stone etc. Pass the palms of the hands over the face once. Strike the sand etc., again with the palms. Rub the right hand with the left palm from the wrist to the elbow and similarly for the left hand with the right palm. Finish with the Kalimatush-Shahadah as for Wudu.

DIAGRAM SHOWING

TIMINGS OF DAILY PRAYERS

CHAPTER 3

THE CONDUCT OF SALAH

In this section, some guidelines for the correct performance of Salah are given.

The most important pre-requisite, Wudu (ablution), is explained in the last chapter. Other important conditions are:-

noon

sunrise sunset

midnight

MAGHRIB

ASR

FAJR

ISHA

ZUHR

Salah the Muslim prayer

1. TIME

Each of the Salah must be offered at or during its proper time. No Salah can be said before its time. There are five obligatory prayers in a day.

Fajr - the morning prayer.

Zuhr - the early afternoon prayer.

'Asr - the late afternoon prayer.

Maghrib - the sun-set prayer.

'Isha - the night prayer.

2. DRESS

Before offering your Salah make sure that you are properly dressed. For men and boys, the dress should be such that it covers their bodies from the navel to the knees at least.

Women are required to cover themselves from head to foot, leaving only the face and hands uncovered. The dress for Salah must be clean and free from all impurities. During the monthly period women are free from obligation of Salah.

3. PLACE

Wherever a man might be, he can turn towards Allah in Salah and in devotion. The Prophet (S.A.W) has said, "*The (whole of the) earth has been rendered for me a mosque: pure and clean.*" Preferably Salah is to be offered in Jama'at - congregation. Salah is to be offered facing the Qiblah, the Ka'bah in Makkah. (See illustration on page 2)

FARD OR NAFILAH

Salah is composed of the Fard (obligatory) and the Nafilah (superogatory) prayers.

The Fard Salah are five in a day. Failure to perform any one of them is a blameable sin. The Nafilah includes the Sunnah, which the Prophet (S.A.W.) used to perform regularly before or after each Fard Salah.

PRAYERS IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

When in circumstances where it is not possible to pray, or when on a journey, you are permitted to shorten Salah. Such a shortened prayer is known as Salat-ul-Qasr.

When travelling one may offer two raka'ats in place of four raka'ats in Zuhr, Asr and 'Isha, but there is no change in the two raka'ats of Fajr and three raka'ats of Maghrib Salah. Besides this concession in Fard Salah, one may leave all the additional Sunnah except the two Sunnah raka'ats of Fajr and the Witr of 'Isha prayer. In case the stay at any one place during the journey exceeds a fortnight, complete Salah, with all the Fard and Sunnah raka'ats must be offered.

If you are sick, you may offer your Salah in a sitting position or lying in bed, by making signs in place of the physical movements.

In journey, in sickness and in other emergencies, one is allowed to offer two separate Salah jointly. Thus Zuhr and 'Asr can be said together in the last part of the period of Zuhr. Maghrib and 'Isha may also be offered similarly towards the end of Maghrib time (when it is almost dark).

THE CALL TO PRAYER -- ADHAN

To assemble the Muslims for congregational prayer, "Adhan", or the call to prayer is given. The caller (Mu'adhin) stands facing Ka'bah (Qiblah), and raising his hands to his ears calls in a loud voice :-

أَكْبَرُ اللهُ أَكْبَرُ اللهُ

ALLAHU AKBAR ALLAHU AKBAR

Allah is the Greatest Allah is the Greatest

أَكْبَرُ اللهُ أَكْبَرُ اللهُ

ALLAHU AKBAR ALLAHU AKBAR

Allah is the Greatest Allah is the Greatest

Salah the Muslim prayer

اللهُ إِلَهٌ لَا أَنْ أَشْهَدُ اللهُ إِلَهٌ لَا أَنْ أَشْهَدُ

ASH-HADU AL-LA ASH-HADU AL-LA

ILAHA ILLALLAH ILAHA ILLALLAH

I bear witness that there is I bear witness that there is

no deity but Allah no deity but Allah

اللهُ رَسُولٌ مُحَمَّدٌ أَنْ أَشْهَدُ

ASH-HADU AN-NA MUHAMMADAR RASULULLAH

I bear witness that Muhammad (S.A.W) is the messenger of Allah

اللهُ رَسُولٌ مُحَمَّدٌ أَنْ أَشْهَدُ

ASH-HADU AN-NA MUHAMMADAR RASULULLAH

I bear witness that Muhammad (S.A.W) is the messenger of Allah

الصَّلَاةُ عَلَى خَيْرِ الصَّلَاةِ عَلَى خَيْرِ

HAYYA 'ALAS SALAH HAYYA 'ALAS SALAH

Come to prayer Come to prayer

الْفَلَاحُ عَلَى خَيْرِ الْفَلَاحِ عَلَى خَيْرِ

HAYYA 'ALAL FALAH HAYYA 'ALAL FALAH

Come to success Come to success

أَكْبَرُ اللهُ أَكْبَرُ اللهُ

ALLAHU AKBAR ALLAHU AKBAR

Allah is the Greatest Allah is the Greatest

اللهُ إِلَهٌ لَا

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH

There is no diety but Allah

In Adhan for Fajr Salah, the following sentence is added after

HAYYA 'ALAL FALAH:-

النَّوْمُ مِنْ خَيْرٍ _____ الصَّلَاةِ

ASSALATU KHAYRUM MINAN NAUM

Salah is better than sleep.

النَّوْمُ مِنْ خَيْرٍ الصَّلَاةِ

ASSALATU KHAYRUM MINAN NAUM

Salah is better than sleep.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) has commanded that we should repeat the same words as mu'azzin (but not aloud) and when he says:

HAYYA 'ALAS-SALAH, HAYYA 'ALAL-FALAH we should say:

بِاللهِ إِنْ قُوَّةٌ وَلَوْ حَوْلَ لَ

LA HAULA WA LA QUWWATA ILLA BILLAH

There is no might no power but from Allah

DU'A AFTER ADHAN

On completion of the Adhan, Muslims are recommended to recite:-

التَّامَّةِ الدَّعْوَةَ هَذِهِ رَبِّ اللَّهُمَّ

ALLAHUMMA RABBA HADHI-HID DA'WA-TIT-TAMMATI

O Allah! Lord of this complete call

مَحْمُودًا أَتِ الْقَائِلَةَ وَالصَّلَاةَ

WAS-SALATIL QA'E-MATI A'TI MUHAMMADAN

and prayer of ours, by the blessing of it give to Muhammad

الْفَضِيلَةَ وَالْوَسِيلَةَ

AL-WASILATA WAL FADI LATA

his eternal rights of intercession, distinction

وَعِدَّتُهُ الَّذِي مَحْمُودًا مَقَامًا وَابْعَثْهُ

WAB 'ATH-HU MAQAMAM-MAHMUDAN

AL LADHI WA 'AT-TAHU

and raise him to the highest rank You have promised him.

IQAMAH

After Adhan when the Muslims are assembled at the place of worship, a second call (Iqamah) is recited by one of the group. This signals the start of the congregational Salah. It is similar to Adhan except that it is recited faster but in a lower tone and the following sentences are recited after HAYYA 'ALLAL FALAH:

الصَّلَاةُ قَامَتْ قَدْ هِيَ الصَّلَاةُ قَامَتْ قَدْ

QAD QAMATIS SALAH QAD QAMATIS SALAH

The prayer has begun The prayer has begun

Narrated Anas bin Malik (RAA): Allah's

Messenger (PBUH) said, *"SUPPLICATION MADE BETWEEN THE ADHAN AND IQAMA IS NOT REJECTED"* (An-Nasa'i)

CHAPTER 4

THE CONTENTS OF SALAH

Salah in Islam is a unique institution. It brings man closer to Allah by harmonising his mental attitude with physical posture. In Salah, a Muslim submits himself completely to his Creator.

When you are sure that you have fulfilled all necessary conditions for Salah, you are ready to offer Salah. A detailed account of how to say Salah is given below:-

Say to yourself that you intend to offer this Salah (Fajr, Zuhr, 'Asr, Maghrib or 'Isha) Fard or Sunnah. Then raise your hands to your ears (as in figure 1) saying:-

أَكْبَرُ اللَّهَ

ALLAHU AKBAR

Allah is the Greatest

NOTE:-

The hand is in line

with ear lobe

Figure 1 Figure 2

Salah the Muslim prayer

Figure 3 Figure 4

Now placing your right hand on the left, just below, above or on the navel (as shown in figure 3 & 4) recite the following:-

وَبِحَمْدِكَ اللَّهُمَّ سُبْحَانَكَ

SUBHANA-KALLA HUMMA WA BI-HAMDIKA

O Allah, Glorified, Praiseworthy.

جَدُّكَ وَتَعَالَى اسْمُكَ وَتَبَارَكَ

WA TABARAKAS-MUKA WA TA'ALA JADDUKA

and Blessed is Your Name and Exalted Your Majesty

غَيْرُكَ إِلَهٌ وَلَا

WA-LA ILAHA GHAIIRUKA

and there is no deity worthy of worship except You.

الرَّجِيمِ الشَّيْطَانِ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَعُوذُ

A'U-DHU BIL-LA-HI MINASH SHAITANIR RAJEEM

I seek refuge in Allah from the rejected Satan

الرَّحِيمِ الرَّحْمَنِ اللَّهُ بِسْمِ

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHEEM

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

After this recite the opening Surah Al-Fatihah:-

الْعَالَمِينَ رَبِّ إِلَهَ الْحَمْدُ

ALHAMDU LIL-LAHI RAB-BIL 'ALAMEEN

Praise be to Allah the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds;

الرَّحِيمِ الرَّحْمَنِ

AR-RAHMA-NIR RAHEEM

Most Gracious, Most Merciful;

الَّذِينَ يَوْمَ مَالِكِ

MALIKI YAU-MID-DEEN

Master of the Day of Judgement.

نَسْتَعِيْزُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ

IYYA-KA N'ABUDU WA-IYYKA NASTA'EEN

You do we worship, and Your aid we seek,

الْمُسْتَقِيمَ الصِّرَاطِ اهْدِنَا

IHDI-NAS-SIRA-TAL MUSTAQEEM

Show us the straight way,

Salah the Muslim prayer

عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْعَمْتَ الَّذِينَ صَوَّطِ

SIRA TAL-LADHINA AN-'AMTA 'ALAIHIM

The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace,

عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَغْضُوبِ غَيْرُ

GHAIRIL MAGHDUBI 'ALAIHIM

those whose (portion) is not wrath,

{أَمْ يَنْ} الضَّالِّيْنَ وَلَا

WALAD-DAL-LIN (AMEEN)

and who go not astray. (O' Allah accept our prayer)

Now recite the following or any other passage from the Holy Qur'an:-

الرَّحِيمِ الرَّحْمَنِ اللَّهُ بِسْمِ

BISMILLA HIR RAHMANIR RAHEEM

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

أَخَذَ اللَّهُ هُوَ قُلْ

QUL HU-WAL-LAHU AHAD

Say: He is Allah the One and Only;

الصَّمَدُ اللَّهُ

ALLA-HUS-SAMAD

Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;

يُولَدُ وَلَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ

LAM YALID WA LAM YULAD

He begets not, nor is He begotten

أَحَدٌ كَفُوا لَهُ يَكُنْ وَلَمْ

WA LAM YAKUL-LAHU KUFU-WAN AHAD

and there is none like unto Him.

Now bow down saying:

اَكْبَرُ اللهُ

ALLAHU AKBAR

Allah is the Greatest

Place your hands on your knees and in this inclined position (Ruku' as shown in figure 5 & 5A) recite these words three times:-

اَلْعَظِيْمُ رَبِّ سُبْحَانَ

SUBHANA RAB-BI-YAL AZEEM

Glory be to my Lord the Great

اَلْعَظِيْمُ رَبِّ سُبْحَانَ

SUBHANA RAB-BI-YAL AZEEM

Glory be to my Lord the Great

اَلْعَظِيْمُ رَبِّ سُبْحَانَ

SUBHANA RAB-BI-YAL AZEEM

Glory be to my Lord the Great

Figure 5 Figure 5A

Salah the Muslim prayer

Figure 6 Figure 7

Then come to the standing position (figure 6 & 7) saying :-

حَمْدُهُ لِمَنْ اللهُ سَمِعَ

SAMI 'ALLAHU LI MAN HAMIDAH

Allah has heard all who praise Him.

اَلْحَمْدُ لَكَ رَبَّنَا

RAB-BANA IAKAL HAMD

Our Lord: Praise be to you

Now saying "Allahu Akbar" prostrate on the ground with your forehead, the knees, the nose and palms of both hands touching the ground. In this position (Sajdah - as in figure 8 & 9) repeat these words three times at least:-

اَلْأَعْلَى رَبِّ سُبْحَانَ

SUBHANA RAB-BI-YAL A'ALA

Glory to my Lord, the Most High.

اَلْأَعْلَى رَبِّ سُبْحَانَ

SUBHANA RAB-BI-YAL A'ALA

Glory to my Lord, the Most High.

اَلْأَعْلَى رَبِّ سُبْحَانَ

SUBHANA RAB-BI-YAL A'ALA

Glory to my Lord, the Most High.

NOTE:- Your nose & forehead must be in line with the carpet.

Sit upright with knees still on the ground after a moments rest perform the second Sajdah saying:-

اَكْبَرُ اللهُ

ALLAHU AKBAR

Allah is the Greatest

Figure 8

Figure 9

In the second Sajdah as before recite the following words three times:-

اَلْأَعْلَى رَبِّ سُبْحَانَ

SUBHANA RAB-BI-YAL A'ALA

Glory to my Lord, the Most High.

Sit upright saying Allahu Akbar. This completes one raka'at of Salah. The second rak'at is said in the same way except that after the second

Sajdah you sit back, with the left foot bent towards the right, which should be placed vertical to the mat with the toes touching the mat. The palms should be lifted from the mat and placed on the knees. In this position (Q'adah - as shown in figures 10 and 11 silently say these words (Tashahhud):-

Figure 10 Figure 11

وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ وَالصَّلَوَاتُ بِهِ التَّجِيَّاتُ

AT-TAHI-YATU LIL-LAHI WAS-SALAWATU
WAT-TAY-YIBATU

All prayers and worship through words, action
and sanctity are for Allah only.

النَّبِيُّ أَيُّهَا عَلَيْكَ السَّلَامُ

AS-SALAMU 'ALAIKA AY-YUHAN-NABIY-YU

Peace be on you, O Prophet.

بَرَكَاتُهُ وَاللَّهُ وَرَحْمَةً

WA RAHMATUL-LAHI WA BARAKATUH

and Mercy of Allah and His blessings.

الصَّالِحِينَ اللَّهُ عِبَادَ وَعَلَى عَلَيْنَا السَّلَامُ

AS-SALAMU 'ALAINA WA 'ALA 'IBADIL-LAHIS-SALIHEEN

Peace be on us and those who are righteous servants of Allah.

Salah the Muslim prayer

اللَّهُ إِلَّا إِلَهَ لَا أَنْ أَشْهَدُ

ASH-SHADU AL-LA ILAHA
IL-LAL-LAHU

I bear witness to the fact that
there is no diety but Allah.

وَرَسُولُهُ عَبْدُهُ مُحَمَّدًا أَنْ وَأَشْهَدُ

WA ASH-HADU AN-NA MUHAMMADAN 'ABDUHU WA
RASULUH

I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.

In a three raka'at (i.e. Maghrib) or four raka'at (like Zuhr, 'Asr and 'Isha)

Salah you stand up for the remaining raka'at after Tashahhud. On the other hand if it is a two rak'at (Fajr) Salah, keep sitting and after this recite Darud (blessing for the Prophet) in these words:-

مُحَمَّدٍ آلَ عَلٍ وَ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَ صَلَّ اللَّهُمَّ

AL-LAHUM-MA SAL-LI 'ALA MUHAMMADIN

WA 'ALA ALI MUHAMMADIN

O Allah, exalt Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad.

إِبْرَاهِيمَ آلَ وَعَلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَ صَلَّيْتَ كَمْ

KAMA SAL-LAITA 'ALA IBRAHIMA WA 'ALA ALI IBRAHIMA

As You did exalt Ibrahim and his followers

مَجِيدٍ حَمِيدٍ إِنَّكَ

IN-NAKA HAMIDUM-MAJEED

You are the Praised, the Glorious

مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَ بَارِكُ اللَّهُمَّ

AL-LAHUM-MA BARIK 'ALA MUHAMMADIN

O Allah, bless Muhammad

مُحَمَّدٍ آلَ عَلٍ وَ

WA 'ALA ALI MUHAMMADIN

and his followers

إِبْرَاهِيمَ آلَ وَعَلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَ بَارَكْتَ كَمْ

KAMA BARAKTA 'ALA IBRAHIMA WA 'ALA ALI IBRAHIMA

as You have blest Ibrahim and his followers.

مَجِيدٌ حَمِيدٌ إِنَّكَ

IN-NAKA HAMIDUM-MAJEED

You are the Praised, the Glorious

And continue silently:-

ذُرِّيَّتِي وَمِنَ الصَّلَةِ مُقِيمٌ اجْعَلْنِي رَبِّ

RAB-BIJ-‘ALNI MUQEIMAS-SALATI WA MIN DHUR-RIY-YATI

O Lord! Make me and my children steadfast in Prayer;

لِ اغْفِرْ رَبَّنَا دُعَا وَتَقَبَّلْ رَبَّنَا

RAB-BANA WA TAQAB-BAL DU’A. RABBA-NAGH-FIRLI

Our Lord! Accept my prayer. Our Lord! forgive me.

الحِسَابِ يَقُومُ يَوْمَ وَمِنِي وَلِلَّهِ وَلِوَالِدَيَّ

WA-LI WALIDAY-YA WA LIL-MU’MININA YAUMA

YAQUM-UL HISAB

and my parents and believers on the Day of Judgement.

Now turn your face to the right (as in figure 13 on next page) saying:-

اللَّهُ وَرَحْمَةً عَلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامُ

AS-SALAMU ‘ALAIKUM WA-RAHMATUL-LAH

Peace be on you and Allah’s blessings.

Salah the Muslim prayer

Then turn your face to the left (as in figure 14) and repeat the above words (aloud).

This completes your two raka’at Salah. The four raka’at of Zuhr, ‘Asr and ‘Isha and the three raka’at of Maghrib are said in an identical manner.

If you are performing a three raka’at (like Maghrib) or four raka’at (like Zuhr, ‘Asr and ‘Isha) Salah stand up after Tashahhud in the second Rak’ah saying ALLAHU AKBAR and recite Al-Fatihah. When you are offering Fard Salah do not recite any additional passage from the Holy Qur’an after Al-Fatihah in the last two raka’at. After the second Sajdah in the fourth raka’at say the Tashahhud, Darud and end with “AS-SALAMU ‘ALAIKUM WA-RAHMATUL-LAH” to each side (first right, then left as shown in the above pictures). This marks the end of Salah.

Figure 13 Figure 14

CHAPTER 5

SUNNAH AND NAFILAH

OR ADDITIONAL PRAYER

As you can see in the chart below, each Salah is composed of (a) Fard, the prescribed prayers, (b) Sunnah and (c) Nafilah or additional prayers. Sunnah prayers are recommended by the Prophet. They are of two types; Sunnah Mu’akkadah & Sunnah Ghair Mu’akkadah. Sunnah Mu’akkadah are highly recommended and should not be missed without a good reason Sunnah Ghair Mu’akkadah, are recommended, however they can be prayed occasionally or missed.

Nafilah prayers are optional. It is very rewarding to offer them if one has the time. The sequence of these additional prayers in each Salah is given below:-

* These Sunnah are Ghair Mu’akkadah

Name of

Salah Period

Fajr 2 2 None

Zuhr 4 4 2 + 2

Asr 4 4* None

Maghrib 3 None 2 + 2

‘Isha 4 4* 2 + 2

+3 + 2

Sunnah or Nafilah

Number

of Fard

Raka'at

Before

Fard

Between Dawn until

Sunrise

Between just past noon

and mid-afternoon

Between mid afternoon

until before sunset

Between just after

sunset until dark

Between dark and

shortly before dawn

After

Fard

Salah the Muslim prayer

SALAT--UL--WITR

The three raka'at prayers said after the Fard and Sunnah of the 'Isha is called Salat-ul-Witr. It is strongly recommended in the practice of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and is Wajib (necessary) according to one section of Muslims. Others regard it a mere Sunnah Salah.

The first two raka'at of this Salat-ul-Witr are said like the first two raka'at of the Maghrib prayers. In the third raka'at after al-Fatihah, recite some additional Surah or verses of the Qur'an.

Then, saying ALLAHU AKBAR raise your hands above your shoulders, fold your hands, and recite the following or any other similar Du'a silently. This is called Du'a-al-Qunut or the prayer of submission:-

وَنَسْتَغْفِرُكَ نَسْتَغْفِرُكَ إِنَّا اللَّهُمَّ

ALLAHUM-MA IN-NA NASTA'EENUKA

WA NAS TAGH FIRU KA

O Allah, we seek Your help, and ask Your forgiveness

عَلَيْكَ نَتَوَكَّلُ وَبِكَ وَتُؤْمِنُ

WA NU'MINU BIKA WA NATAWAK-KALU 'ALAIKA

and believe in You and trust in You,

وَنُشْكُرُكَ الْخَيْرَ عَلَيْكَ وَنُثْنِي

WA NUTHNI 'ALAIKAL-KHAIRA WA NASHKURUKA

and we praise You in the best manner and we thank You,

وَنَنْتَكُ وَنَخْلَعُ نَكْفُرُكَ وَلَ

WALA NAKFURUKA WA NAKHLA'U WA NATRUKU

and we are not ungrateful and we cast off and forsake him

نَعْبُدُ إِيَّاكَ اللَّهُمَّ يَفْجُرُكَ مَنْ

MAYN-YAF JURUKA 'ALLAHUM-MA IY-YAKA N'ABUDU

who disobeys You. O Allah, You alone do we worship,

نَسْعَى وَإِلَيْكَ وَنَسْجُدُ نَصَلِّ وَلَكَ

WA LAKA NUSALLI WA NASJUDU WA ILAIKA NAS'A

and to You we pray, and before You do we prostrate,

to You do we turn to in haste

عَذَابِكَ وَنُخْشَ رَحْمَتِكَ وَنَرْجُو وَنُحْفِدُ

WA NAHFIDU WA NARJU RAHMATAKA WA

NAKSHHA ADHABAKA

and we submit, and hope for Your mercy,

and we fear Your punishment

مُلْحِقٌ بِالْكَفَّارِ عَذَابَكَ إِنَّ

IN-NA ‘ADHABAKA BIL-KUF-FARI MULHIQ

Your punishment surely overtakes the unbelievers

After this saying ALLAHU AKBAR bow down in Ruk’u and then

complete the rest of the prayers like the Maghrib prayers.

PERSONAL PRAYER (DU’A) AFTER

SALAH

When you have completed your Fard or Sunnah prayers, you may pray to Allah in your own words offering him praise, thanksgiving or asking him for forgiveness for yourself, other Muslims, your own dear and near ones. For this Du’a keep sitting after the obligatory or Sunnah prayers, hold up your hands near each other with the palms up and fingers slightly bent (as shown in figure 15). In this position you may offer anyone of these or other personal prayers:-

Figure 20

السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ أَنْتَ اللَّهُمَّ

ALLAHUM-MA ANTAS-SALAMU WA MINKAS-SALAM

O Allah, You are the Author of Peace and from You comes Peace.

وَالْإِكْرَامُ الْجَلِيلُ ذَا يَا تَبَارَكْتَ

TABARAKTA YA-DHALJALALI WAL-IKRAM

Blessed are You, O Lord of Majesty and Honour.

وَلَيْسَ أَتَذِيت وَلِوَالِدَيَّ لِيْ اغْفِرْ اللَّهُمَّ

ALLAHUM-MAGHFIRLI WA LIWALIDAYYA

WA LI-ASATI-DHATI

O Allah, forgive me and my parents and teachers,

وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلِجَمِيعِ

WA LIJAMEE’IL MU’MINEENA WAL-MU’MINATI WAL

MUSLIMEENA WAL MUSLIMAT

and all the believing men and women and obedient men

and women with Your mercy.

الرَّاحِمِيْ أَرْحَمَ بِرَحْمَتِكَ

BIRAHMATIKA YA ARHAMAR-RAHIMEEN

O Most Merciful of (all) those who show mercy.

CHAPTER 6

SALAH ON SPECIFIC OCCASIONS

JUMU’AH PRAYER (Friday)

Beside the daily Salah, the Friday prayer is also obligatory upon Muslim men. For Muslim women it is not obligatory, but is desirable if they are able to do so without upsetting their household work.

The Friday Salah is offered in congregation on Friday at Zuhr time. First the Imam delivers a sermon (Khutbah). Then he leads the congregation in a two rak’at Salah. After this two or more raka’at of Sunnah or Nafilah prayers are offered individually.

TARAWEEH PRAYER ((Ramadan))

These prayers are offered during the month of Ramadan after ‘Isha Salah. These consist of eight, twelve or twenty raka’at, and are offered two by two with a short rest between every four raka’at. They may be said alone but collective prayers are recommended. These are additional Sunnah prayers.

THE EID PRAYER (Salatul--‘Idayan)

There are two Eid or occasions of great festivity for Muslims. The first is called Eidul-Fitr or the festival of fast breaking. It is celebrated on the first day of the tenth Islamic month (Shawwal) following Ramadan, the month of fasting. It marks great thanksgiving for the Muslims all over the world.

The second Eid is the Eidul-Adha or the festival of great sacrifice, which is observed on the tenth of Dhul-Hijjah, the last Islamic month. The animals are sacrificed to celebrate the great sacrifice of the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him).

On both these Eids, Eid prayers are offered in congregation any time after sunrise and before noon. There is no Adhan (call for prayer) or Iqamah Salah the Muslim prayer

(second call before congregation). The Eid prayer consists of two raka'at (offered just as the two raka'at of Jumu'ah prayer are said) with six to sixteen additional Takbirs' (ALLAHU AKBAR). You say three or more Takbirs in the first raka'at after 'Thana and three or more Takbirs' in the second raka'at before you bow down for Ruku'.

A sermon (Khutbah) is delivered by the Imam (leader of the prayer) after the two raka'at Eid prayer unlike the Jumu'ah prayer when it precedes the prayer.

The presence of all Muslims, women and children included is strongly recommended.

FUNERAL PRAYERS (JANAZAH)

It is a prayer to Allah for a deceased Muslim, and is a common obligation on Muslims of the locality. The funeral Salah is offered in congregation but unlike other formal prayers, it has neither any Ruku' (bowing) nor any Sajdah (prostration). Following is the complete sequence of the funeral prayer.

Saying Takbir (Allahu Akbar) with the rest of the congregation raise your hands to your ears, then bring them down on, above or below the navel as in formal prayers with the right hand on the left. Then recite the following praise or Thana silently:-

وَبِحَمْدِكَ اللَّهُمَّ سُبْحَانَكَ

SUBHANA-KALLA HUMMA WA BI-HAMDIKA

O Allah, Glorified, Praiseworthy.

جَدُّكَ وَتَعَالَى اسْمُكَ وَتَبَارَكَ

WA TABARAKAS-MUKA WA TA'ALA JADDUKA

and Blessed is Your Name and Exalted Your Majesty

غَيْرُكَ إِلَهٌ وَلَا

WA-LA ILAHA GHAIKUK

and there is no deity worthy of worship except You.

After Thana (SUBHANAKA....) again raise hands to your ears saying Allahu Akbar, Now silently recite the Darud:-

مُحَمَّدٌ عَلَى صَلَواتِ اللَّهِ

AL-LAHUM-MA SAL-LI 'ALA MUHAMMADIN

O Allah, exalt Muhammad

مُحَمَّدٍ آلِ وَعَلَى

WA 'ALA ALI MUHAMMADIN

and the followers of Muhammad.

إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى صَلَواتِ كُمْ

KAMA SAL-LAITA 'ALA IBRAHEEMA

As You did exalt Ibrahim

إِبْرَاهِيمَ آلِ وَعَلَى

WA 'ALA ALI IBRAHEEMA

and the followers of Ibrahim

مَجِيدٌ حَمِيدٌ إِنَّكَ

IN-NAKA HAMEEDUM-MAJEED

You are the Praised, the Glorious

مُحَمَّدٌ عَلَى بَارِكُكَ اللَّهُمَّ

AL-LAHUM-MA BARIK 'ALA MUHAMMADIN

O Allah, bless Muhammad

مُحَمَّدٌ آلٌ وَعَلَى

WA 'ALA A'ALI MUHAMMADIN

and his followers

إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى بَارَكْتَ كَمْ

KAMA BARAKTA 'ALA IBRAHEEMA

as You have blest Ibrahim

إِبْرَاهِيمَ آلٌ وَعَلَى

WA 'ALA A'ALI IBRAHEEMA

and the followers of Ibrahim

مَجِيدٌ حَمِيدٌ إِنَّكَ

IN-NAKA HAMEEDUM-MAJEED

You are the Praised, the Glorious

Now saying ALLAHU AKBAR recite the following:-

وَمَيِّتَنَا لِحَيَاتِنَا اغْفِرْ اللَّهُمَّ

ALLAHUM-MAGHFIR LI-HAYYINA WA MAYYITINA

O Allah forgive our living and our dead

وَعَايِنَا وَشَاهِدِنَا

WA SHAHIDINA WA GHA'IBINA

the present and the absent.

وَكِبِّيْنَا وَصَغِيْنَا

WA SAGHIRINA WA KABIRINA

our young and the old,

وَأُنثَانَا وَذَكَرْنَا

WA DHAKARINA WA UNTHANA

and the males and females.

الْإِسْلَامَ عَلَى فَاحِيهِ مِنَّا أَحْيَيْتَهُ مَنْ اللَّهُمَّ

ALLAHUM-MA MAN AHYAYTAHU MIN-NA

FA-AHYIHI 'ALAL ISLAM

O Allah, be to whom You accord life among us cause him

to live in the observance of Islam

الْإِيمَانَ عَلَى فَتَوَفُّهُ مِنَّا تَوَفَّيْتَهُ وَمَنْ

WAMAN TAWAF-FAITAHU MIN-NA

FATAWAF-FAHU 'ALAL IMAN

and be to whom You give death, cause him to die

in the state of Iman (faith).

أَجْرَهُ تَحْرِمْنَا لَكَ اللَّهُمَّ

ALLAHUMMA LA TAHRIMNA AJRAHU

O Allah! do not deprive us of reward for

(supplicating for) him or her,

بَعْدَهُ نَقْتَنَّا وَلَئِنْ

WA LA TAFTINNA BA'DAHU

nor put us to trial after him (or her)

If the deceased is a minor a boy or a girl then recite this Du'a:-

فَرَطًا لَّنَا اجْعَلْهُ اللَّهُمَّ

ALLAHUM-MA J'ALHU LANA FARATAN

O Allah, Make him our fore-runner,

Salah the Muslim prayer

ذُخْرًا وَ أَجْرًا لَنَا وَاجْعَلْهُ

WA J'ALHU LANA AJRAWN WA DHUKHRAWN

and make him for us a reward and a treasure,

وَمُشْفَعًا شَافِعًا لَنَا وَاجْعَلْهُ

WAJ'ALHULANA SHAFI'AWN WA MUSHAF-FI'AN

and make him for us a pleader, and accept his pleading.

أَكْبَرُ اللهُ

ALLAHU AKBAR

Allah is the Greatest

After this the Imam again says aloud “Allahu Akbar”. The congregation repeats these words silently. Then the Imam and the congregation turn their faces first to the right and then to the left side saying As-salamu-Alaikum Wa-Rahmatullah on either side.

اللهُ وَرَحْمَةُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

AS-SALAMU 'ALAIKUM WA RAHMATUL-LAH

Peace be on you and Allah's blessings.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RAA)

The Prophet (PBUH) said:-

“WHEN YOU PRAY ON THE DEAD,
MAKE A SINCERE SUPPLICATION
FOR HIM.”

(Abu Dau'd)

THE LAST TWO SURAHS FROM THE QUR'AN

Surah Falaq: 113

بِسْمِ *الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحْمَنِ اللهُ
*إِذَا وَقَبْ غَاسِقِي شَ ِ وَمِنْ *خَلَقَ مَا شَ ِ مِنْ *الْفَلَقِ بِرَبِّ أَعُوذُ قَلِ
*إِذَا حَسَدَ حَاسِدِي شَ ِ وَمِنْ *الْعَقْدِ فِي النَّفَاثَاتِ شَ ِ وَمِنْ

“QUL A'UZUBI RAB-BIL FALAQ. MIN SHAR-RIMA KHALAQ.

WA MIN SHAR-RI GHASIQIN IZA WAQAB. WA MIN SHAR-RIN

NAFFATHATI FIL 'UQAD. WA MIN SHAR-RI HASIDIN I ZA HASAD.”

“Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn, from the evil of all that He has created, and from the evil of the darkness of night when it falls.

And from the evil of those (charmers) who blow into knots.

And from the evil of the envier when he envies.”

Surah Nas: 114

*الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحْمَنِ اللهُ بِسْمِ
*الْخَنَاسِ الْوَسْوَاسِ شَ ِ مِنْ *النَّاسِ إِلَهَ *النَّاسِ مَلِكِ *النَّاسِ بِرَبِّ أَعُوذُ قَلِ
*وَالنَّاسِ الْجَنَّةِ مِنْ *النَّاسِ صُدُورِ فِي يَوْسُوسِ الَّذِي

“QUL A'UZUBI RAB-BIN NAS MALIKIN NAS. ILA HIN-NAS. MIN

SHAR-RIL WASWA SIL KHAN-NAS. ALLAZI YUWASWISU FEE

SUDU RIN-NAS. MINAL JIN-NATI WAN-NAS.”

“Say: I seek refuge in the Sustainer of Mankind, the Owner of Mankind, Lord of Mankind. From the evil of the sneaking whisperer. Who whispers in the hearts of mankind. (Whether he be) from among jinns or mankind.”

Amounts of Rakah for each prayer

Fajr:

i) First two rakat Sunnat Mokadda

ii) Two rakat Fard

Zuhr:

i) Four rakat Sunnat Mokadda

ii) Four rakat Fard

iii) Two rakat sunnat Mokadda

iv) Two rakat Nafl (Optional but spiritually beneficial)

Asr:

- i) Four rakat sunnat ghair mokadda (Optional but spiritually beneficial)**
- ii) Four rakat Fard**

Maghrib

- i) Three rakat Fard**
- ii) Two rakat Sunnat Mokadda**
- iii) Two rakat nafl (Optional but spiritually beneficial)**

Isha:

- i) Four rakat sunnat e Ghair Mokadda (Optional but spiritually beneficial)**
- ii) Four rakat Fard**
- iii) Two Rakat Sunnat Mokadda**
- iv) Two rakat Nafil (Optional but spiritually beneficial)**
- v) Three rakat Wajib**
- vi) Two rakat Nafil (Optional but spiritually beneficial)**

Must be with Wudu for all Salahs.

Salatul Ishraq : Saaiduna Anas Bin Malik Radiallahu Anhu narrates that the Prophet of Allah Sallallahu Alahi Wasalam said "Whosoever offers his fajr prayer in congregation, then remains seated making zikr of Allah until the sun rises and thereafter offers two rakats, they will receive the reward of performing a Hajj and Umrah". (Sunan Tirmizi)

The Salah of the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him)

Hadrat Mughira (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) prayed for so long in the night in standing posture that his feet got swollen up. His companions said to him, "O Prophet of Allah! Why do you exert so much when Allah (The Glorified and the Exalted) has forgiven you all sins." The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) replied, "Should I not be a grateful servant of Allah?" (Bukhari, Muslim)

Adhan and Iqama

Narrated Hadrat Anas (may Allah be pleased with him): The people mentioned the fire and the bell (they suggested those as signals to indicate the starting of prayers), and by that they mentioned the Jews and the Christians. Then Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him) was ordered to pronounce the Adhan for the prayer by saying its wordings twice, and for the Iqama (the call for actual standing for the prayers in rows) by saying its wordings once (except for Qad - Qamatis-Salat which should be said twice). (Bukhari)

First Questioning will be about Salah

On the authority of Hadrat Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said:

The first of his actions for which a servant of Allah (The Glorified and the Exalted) will be held accountable on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayers. If they are in order, then he will have prospered and succeeded; and if they are wanting, then he will have failed and lost. If there is something defective in his obligatory prayers, the Lord (The Glorified and the Exalted) will say: See if My servant has any optional prayers with which may be completed that which was defective in his obligatory prayers. Then the rest of his actions will be judged in like fashion. (Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, an-Nasai, Ibn Majah and Ahmad). (Hadith Qudsi)

Pray in All Circumstances

Narrated 'Imran bin Husain (may Allah be pleased with him): I had piles, so I asked the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) about the prayer. He said, "Pray while standing and if you can't, pray while sitting and if you cannot do even that, then pray lying on your side." (Bukhari)

Salah Erases Sins

Hadrat Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said, "Let anyone tell me; if a stream flows by the house of any person and he bathes in it five times a day, whether any dirt will remain on his body." The companions replied that no dirt

would remain in such a case. He said, "So is the case with prescribed prayers. Allah forgives men's sins (minor) on their account." (Bukhari, Muslim)

Salah is the Best Deed

Hadrat Abdullah Ibn Masud (may Allah be pleased with him) said that he enquired of the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) what was the best deed in the sight of Allah. The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) replied, "To say prescribed prayers at stated hours." I asked what was the next best. He said, "To be good to parents." I again asked what deed ranked next. He said, "To do Jihad in the way of Allah." Ibn Masud (may Allah be pleased with him) says that if he had gone on asking, the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) would have told him more. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Salah Brings Salvation

Hadrat Abdullah bin Amr (may Allah be pleased with him) said that one day the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) was talking about prescribed prayers and he said, "Whoso is regular in his prayers it will illumine his face, testify to the firmness of his faith and be the cause of his salvation on the Day of Judgement. And whoso neglects the prayers will neither acquire any glow nor staunchness of faith nor any means of salvation and he will join, on the Day of Resurrection, the company of Korah (Qarun), Pharoah, Haman and Ubay bin Khalaf." (Ahmad, Darimy, Baihaqi)

The Merit of Each Salah

Narrated by Hadrat Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him): Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said, "Whoever misses the 'Asr prayer (intentionally) then it is as if he lost his family and property." (Bukhari)

Hadrat Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said, "If people only knew the reward of giving the prayer-call or the merit of standing in the first row of the congregational prayers, they would insist on drawing lots for finding a place therein. And if they could know the merit of repairing to the mosque early for noon prayers, they would go there running and if they were to know the blessings of night and early morning prayers, they would go to the mosque dragging themselves on their buttocks if they had not the strength to walk upto it" (Bukhari, Muslim)

Say Prayers in Congregation

Hadrat Abu Darda (may Allah be pleased with him) said: They Holy Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said, "If they are three persons in a habitation or in a jungle and they do not say their prescribed prayers jointly, it would mean that the devil has gained ascendancy over them. Therefore, make a rule for yourselves to say congregational prayers, for a goat which leaves the flock is devoured by the wolf." (Ahmad, Abu Dawud, an-Nasai)

Merit of the Congregational Prayer

Hadrat Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said: Prayer of a man in his house is one prayer, and his prayer in the mosque of the tribes is prayer by 25 times, and his prayer in the congregational mosque is prayer by 500 times, and his prayer in the farthest mosque Masjid Aqsa (of Jerusalem) is prayer by 50,000 times and his prayer in my mosque is prayer by 50,000 times and his prayer in the sacred mosque (of Ka'ba) is prayer by 100,000 times. (Ibn Majah)

The Timing of the Five Prayers

Hadrat Abdullah bin Amr (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said: The time of Zuhr prayer remains till the sun declines and the shadow of a man becomes double his length and so long as the Asr prayer does not come, and the time of Asr prayer remains so long as the sun does not become yellow: and the time of Maghrib prayer remains so long as the red hue does not disappear; and the time for Isha prayers remains up to the midnight, and the time for Fajr prayer runs from the appearance of dawn till the sun does not rise, but when the sun rises, keep away from prayer because it rises between two horns of the devil. (Muslim)

How to Perform Salah

Hadrat Abu Hamid as Sayidi (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated amongst ten of the companions of the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him): I know better than you about the prayer of Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him). They asked: Narrate. He said: When the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) stood for prayer, he raised his hands till he took them opposite his shoulders, then he recited takbir, then he read (the Qur'an), then he recited takbir and raised up his hands till he took them opposite his shoulders, then bowed placing his

palms upon his knees, then making himself straight, neither lowering his head nor raising it up. Then he raised up his head saying, "Allah hears one who praises Him": then he raised up his hands till he took them opposite his shoulders by being straight: and he said: "Allah is the greatest." Then he lowered himself to the ground in prostration keeping his hands away from his two sides and bending the toes of his feet, he raised up his head and bent his left foot and sat on it, then he sat straight till every bone returned to its proper place. Next he prostrated and said: "Allah is Most Great", raising himself, and bent on his left foot and sat on it. Then he sat straight till every bone returned to its proper place. Then he stood up and did the same thing in the second Rak'at. At the end of the two Rak'ats he stood and said takbir raising up his hands till he took them opposite his shoulders, just as he recited takbir when he opened the prayer, then he did the same in the remaining portion of his prayer till when the prostration in which there was Taslim, he put out his left foot and sat on his hip bone upon his left side. Then he uttered Taslim. They said: You have spoken the truth. He used to pray thus. (Abu Dawud)

Straight Rows in Salah

Hadrat Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said: make your rows straight, because the straightening of lines is part of the Aqamat of prayer. (Bukhari and Muslim)

Follow the Imam

Hadrat Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) led us in prayer one day, and when he finished his prayer he faced us and said, "O people, I am your Imam, so do not bow, prostrate yourselves, stand, or go away before I do, for I see you both in front of me and behind me." (Muslim)

Hadrat Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said: The Imam is appointed to be followed. So when he recites takbir, recite takbir: and when he recites (Qur'an), keep silent. (Abu Dawud, an-Nasai, Ibn Majah)

Dua After Salah

Hadrat Sawbhan (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that when Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) finished his prayer, he begged pardon thrice (Istighfaar) and said:

O Allah! Thou are Peace, and from Thee is peace. Thou are Blessed,
O Lord of Glory and Honour. (Muslim)

Tasbih After Salah

Hadrat Ka'ab bin Uzhrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said: There are some recitations after prayer, of which the reciters or the doers at the end of each obligatory prayer will not be disappointed -Tasbih for 33 times, Tahmid for 33 times and Takbir for 34 times. (Muslim)

Dua Qunut in Salah

Narrated Hadrat Anas (may Allah be pleased with him): The Qunut used to be recited in the Maghrib and the Fajr prayers. (Bukhari)

Salatus-Safar

Narrated Hadrat Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him): The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) once stayed for nineteen days and prayed shortened prayers. So when we travelled (and stayed) for nineteen days, we used to shorten the prayer but if we travelled (and stayed) for a longer period we used to offer the full prayer. (Bukhari)

Narrated Hadrat Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him): Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) used to offer the Zuhr and 'Asr prayers together on journeys, and also used to offer the Maghrib and 'Isha' prayers together. (Bukhari)

Friday Prayers

Narrated Hadrat Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him): The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said, "When it is a Friday, the angels stand at the gate of the mosque and keep on writing the names of the persons coming to the mosque in succession according to their arrivals. The example of the one who enters the mosque in the earliest hour is that of one offering a camel (in sacrifice). The one coming next is like one offering a cow and then a ram and then a chicken and then an egg respectively. When the Imam comes out (for Jumu'a prayer) they (i.e. angels) fold their papers and listen to the Khutba." (Bukhari)

Hadrat Abdul Ja'ad az-Zumairi (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said: Whoso gives up three Friday prayers by way of

neglecting them, Allah (The Glorified and the Exalted) will seal up his heart. (Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, an-Nasai, Ibn Majah)

Eid Prayers

Narrated Hadrat Abdullah bin Umar (may Allah be pleased with him): Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) used to offer the prayer of Eid-ul-Adha and Eid-ul-Fitr and then deliver the khutba after the prayer. (Bukhari)

Salatul Witr

Narrated mother of faithful believers, Hadrat 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her): Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) offered Witr prayer at different nights at various hours extending (from the 'Isha prayer) up to the last hour of the night. (Bukhari)

Sunnah Muakkadah

Hadrat Umm Habiba (may Allah be pleased with her) reported Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) as saying, "A house will be built in paradise for anyone who prays in a day and a night twelve rakas (Sunnah prayers), four before and two after the noon prayer, two after the sunset prayer, two after the night prayer and two before the dawn prayer." (Tirmidhi)

Tahajjud

Hadrat Abu Ummah (may Allah be pleased with him): The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said, "Make Tahajjud prayers obligatory for yourselves. This is the way of pious gone before you and it is a means of attaining nearness to Allah, it atones for your sins and prevents their commission." (Tirmidhi)

Taraweh

Hadrat Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) says that the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) used to encourage people to offer extra prayers (Taraweh) but would not give a positive direction for it. He used to say "Whoso offers Taraweh prayers devotedly and sincerely, all his former sins would be forgiven." The narrator says that this practice continued after the passing away of the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him), during the khilafat of Sayyidina Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) and the early part of Sayyidina Umar's (may Allah be pleased with him) khilafat (then it became congregational) (Muslim)

Tahiyatul Masjid

Narrated Hadrat Abu Qatada bin Rab'i Al-Ansari (may Allah be pleased with him): The Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said, "If anyone of you enters a Mosque, he should not sit until he has offered a two Rak'at prayer." (Bukhari)

Salatul Tasbeeh

Hadrat Abdullah Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said to Hadrat Abbas Ibn Abdul Muttalib (may Allah be pleased with him): O Abbas, O my uncle! Should I not give you, should I not tell you something in lieu of performance of which Allah will forgive all your past and future sins, old and new, done wittingly or unwittingly, evident or concealed. You should offer four Rak'ah of prayers in a way that in each Rak'ah after reciting surah Fatiha and a verse of the Qur'an say fifteen times "SubhanAllah wal Hamdulillah wa la ilaha illallahu Wallahu Akbar" and then repeat it ten times before finishing the bow, ten times on standing erect and ten times before finishing each of the prostrations, ten times in between them and ten times after the second prostration before getting up. Thus in each Rak'ah this has to be repeated seventy-five times. If you can, offer this prayer every day, if not once in every week or once in every month or at least once in a year. If even this is not possible, at least once in a life time." (Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, Baihaqi)

Istikhara Prayer

Narrated Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah As-Salami (may Allah be pleased with him): Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) used to teach his companions to perform the prayer of Istikhara for each and every matter just as he used to teach them the Suras from the Qur'an. He used to say, "If anyone of you intends to do something, he should offer a two-Rak'at prayer other than the compulsory prayers, and after finishing it, he should say: O Allah! I consult You, for You have all knowledge, and appeal to You to support me with Your Power, and ask for Your Bounty, for You are able to do things while I am not, and You Know while I do not, and You are the Knower of the Unseen. O Allah! If You know that this matter (name your matter) is good for me both at present and in the future, (or in my religion), in my present life and in the Hereafter, then fulfil it for me and make it easy

for me, and then bestow Your Blessings on me in that matter. O Allah! If You Know that this matter is not good for me in my religion, in my present life and in my coming Hereafter (or at present or in the future), then divert me from it and choose for me what is good whenever it may be, and make me be pleased with it." (Bukhari)

Salatul Istisqa (for rain)

Narrated Abbad bin Tamim from his uncle, "I saw the Prophet (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) on the day when he went out to offer the Istisqa' prayer. He turned his back towards the people and faced the Qibla and asked Allah for rain. Then he turned his cloak inside out and led us in a two-Rak'ah prayer and recited the Qur'an aloud in them." (Bukhari)

Sunnah Prayer on Sun Eclipse (salatul kusuf)

Narrated Hadrat Al-Mughira bin Shu'ba (may Allah be pleased with him): "The sun eclipsed in the life-time of Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) on the day when (his son) Ibrahim died. So the people said that the sun had eclipsed because of the death of Ibrahim. Allah's Messenger (may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said, "The sun and the moon do not eclipse because of the death or life (i.e. birth) of someone. When you see the eclipse, pray and invoke Allah." (Bukhari)

The Prophet (PBUH) has said: "Whoever guides [another] to a good deed will get a reward similar to the one who performs it."

[Saheeh Muslim]

If Allah guides a person through you, it is better for you than all that is on the earth." (Bukhari No. 2783 & Muslim No. 2406). Convey (my teachings) to the people even if it were a single sentence" (Sahih Bukhari, Vol.4, Hadith 667)

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Salat-ut-Tasbeih: Abu Rafi (R.A) narrated that Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) said to Abbas (R.A), "O Uncle! Shall I not join ties with you? Shall I not give you? Shall I not benefit you?" He said, "Of course, O Messenger of Allah!" So, he said, "O Uncle! Pray four raka'at. recite in each raka'ah the Surah Fatiha and a Surah and when you have finished the recital, say (Allahu Akbar Wal Hamdulillah Wa Subhan Allah) fifteen times before making the ruku. Then go into the ruku and repeat them ten times. Then raise your head and say the words ten times. Then go into prostrations and repeat them ten times, and raise your head and say the words ten times. Then prostrate and say the words ten times, and (again) raise your head and repeat them ten times before you stand up. So, this is (in all) seventy five in each raka'ah and it three hundred in all four rak'at. Even if your sins are like the sand particles of Aaliyah, Allah will forgive them for you". He (Abbas (R.A) said, "O Messenger of Allah! Who can stand up for it every day?" He said, "If you cannot establish it every day, then observe it on Friday. And if you cannot do that every Friday then observe it every month". And he did not cease to say that until he said, "Offer it once in a year".

Imam Tirmidhi (R.A) said: This hadith as narrated by Abu Rafi is Gharib.[Jami Tirmidhi (2/514)]

Salatul tahajjud : "Establish prayer at the decline of the sun [from its meridian] until the darkness of the night and [also] the Qur'an of dawn. Indeed, the recitation of dawn is ever witnessed.And from [part of] the night, pray with it as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station." (Surah Isra, 17:78-79).

Here are some hadiths about tahajjud:

Abu Hurairah reports that the Messenger of Allah (saws) said: "Our Lord Descends to the lowest heaven during the last third of the night, inquiring: `Who will call on Me so that I may respond to him? Who is

asking something of Me so I may give it to him? Who is asking for My forgiveness so I may forgive him?"[Bukhari and Muslim.]

Abdullah ibn `Amr reports that the Prophet (saws) said: "The most beloved fast to Allah is the fast of (Prophet) Dawood (a.s.). And the most beloved prayer to Allah is the prayer of (Prophet) Dawood (a.s.). He (Prophet Dawood (a.s.)) would sleep half of the night and then pray during the next third of the night and then sleep during the last sixth of the night. And he would fast one day and not fast the next." [Bukhari and Muslim.]

Abu Hurayra (Allah be pleased with him) reports that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him, his family, and companions) said, "The best prayer after the obligatory prayers is the night prayer." [Muslim]

Abd Allah ibn Salam (Allah be pleased with him) reports that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him, his family, and companions) said, "O people! Spread the salams, feed others, maintain family ties, and pray at night when others sleep and you will enter Heaven safely." [Tirmidhi, Hakim]

Narrated Al-Mughira: The Prophet(SAW) used to stand (in the prayer) or pray till both his feet or legs swelled. He was asked why (he offered such an unbearable prayer) and he said, "should I not be a thankful slave." [Bukhari]

Narrated Salim's father: In the life-time of the Prophet(SAW) whosoever saw a dream would narrate it to Allah's Apostle(SAW). I had a wish of seeing a dream to narrate it to Allah's Apostle (p.b.u.h) I was a grown up boy and used to sleep in the Mosque in the life-time of the Prophet. I saw in the dream that two angels caught hold of me and took me to the Fire which was built all round like a built well and had two poles in it and the people in it were known to me. I started saying, "I seek refuge with Allah from the Fire." Then I met another angel who told me not to be afraid. I narrated the dream to Hafsa who told it to Allah's Apostle(SAW). The Prophet(SAW) said, "Abdullah is a good man. I wish he prayed Tahajjud." After that 'Abdullah (i.e. Salim's father) used to sleep but a little at night. [Bukhari]

Narrated 'Aisha: Allah's Apostle(SAW) used to offer eleven Rakat and that was his prayer. He used to prolong the prostration to such an extent that one could recite fifty verses (of the Quran) before he would lift his head. He used to pray two Rakat (Sunna) before the Fajr prayer and then used to lie down on his right side till the call-maker came and informed him about the prayer. [Bukhari]

'Praying at Night in Ramadaan (Taraweeh)' of Sahih Bukhari.

226 Narrated Abu Huraira: I heard Allah's Apostle saying regarding Ramadan, "Whoever prayed at night in it (the month of Ramadan) out of sincere Faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven."

227 Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "Whoever prayed at night the whole month of Ramadan out of sincere Faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven." Ibn Shihab (a sub-narrator) said, "Allah's Apostle died and the people continued observing that (i.e. Nawafil offered individually, not in congregation), and it remained as it was during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr and in the early days of 'Umar's Caliphate." 'Abdur Rahman bin 'Abdul Qari said, "I went out in the company of 'Umar bin Al-Khattab one night in Ramadan to the mosque and found the people praying in different groups. A man praying alone or a man praying with a little group behind him. So, 'Umar said, 'In my opinion I would better collect these (people) under the leadership of one Qari (Reciter) (i.e. let them pray in congregation!'. So, he made up his mind to congregate them behind Ubai bin Ka'b. Then on another night I went again in his company and the people were praying behind their reciter. On that, 'Umar remarked, 'What an excellent Bid'a (i.e. innovation in religion) this is; but the prayer which they do not perform, but sleep at its time is better than the one they are offering.' He meant the prayer in the last part of the night. (In those days) people used to pray in the early part of the night."

228 Narrated 'Aisha: (the wife of the Prophet) Allah's Apostle used to pray (at night) in Ramadan.

229 Narrated 'Urwa: That he was informed by 'Aisha, "Allah's Apostle went out in the middle of the night and prayed in the mosque and some men prayed behind him. In the morning, the people spoke about it and then a large number of them gathered and prayed behind him (on the second night). In the next morning the people again talked about it and on the third night the mosque was full with a large number of people. Allah's Apostle came out and the people prayed behind him. On the fourth night the Mosque was overwhelmed with people and could not accommodate them, but the Prophet came out (only) for the morning prayer. When the morning prayer was finished he recited Tashah-hud and (addressing the people) said, "Amma ba'du, your presence was not hidden from me but I was afraid lest the night prayer (Qiyam) should be enjoined on you and you might not be able to carry it on." So, Allah's Apostle died and the situation remained like that (i.e. people prayed individually). "

230 Narrated Abu Salama bin 'Abdur Rahman: that he asked 'Aisha "How was the prayer of Allah's Apostle in Ramadan?" She replied, "He did not pray more than eleven Rakat in Ramadan or in any other month. He used to pray four Rakat ---- let alone their beauty and length----and then he would pray four ----let alone their beauty and length ----and then he would pray three Rakat (Witr)." She added, "I asked, 'O Allah's Apostle! Do you sleep before praying the Witr?' He replied, 'O 'Aisha! My eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep."

231 Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "Whoever fasted the month of Ramadan out of sincere Faith (i.e. belief) and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his past sins will be forgiven, and whoever stood for the prayers in the night of Qadr out of sincere Faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven."

232 Narrated Ibn 'Umar: Some men amongst the companions of the Prophet were shown in their dreams that the night of Qadr was in the last seven nights of Ramadan. Allah's Apostle said, "It seems that all your dreams agree that (the Night of Qadr) is in the last seven nights, and whoever wants to search for it (i.e. the Night of Qadr) should search in the last seven (nights of Ramadan)."

233 Narrated Abu Salama: I asked Abu Sa'id, and he was a friend of mine, (about the Night of Qadr) and he said, "We practiced Itikaf (seclusion in the mosque) in the middle third of the month of Ramadan with the Prophet . In the morning of the 20th of Ramadan, the Prophet came and addressed us and said, 'I was informed of (the date of the Night of Qadr) but I was caused to forget it; so search for it in the odd nights of the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan. (In the dream) I saw myself prostrating in mud and water (as a sign). So, whoever was in I'tikaf with me should return to it with me (for another 10-day's period)', and we returned. At that time there was no sign of clouds in the sky but suddenly a cloud came and it rained till rain-water started leaking through the roof of the mosque which was made of date-palm leaf stalks. Then the prayer was established and I saw Allah's Apostle prostrating in mud and water and I saw the traces of mud on his forehead."

234 Narrated 'Aisha: Allah's Apostle said, "Search for the Night of Qadr in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan."

235 Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri: Allah's Apostle used to practice Itikaf (in the mosque) in the middle third of Ramadan and after passing the twenty nights he used to go back to his house on the 21st, and the people who were in Itikaf with him also used to go back to their houses. Once in Ramadan, in which he practiced Itikaf, he established the night prayers at the night in which he used to return home, and then he addressed the people and ordered them whatever Allah wished him to order and said, "I used to practice Itikaf for these ten days (i.e. the middle 113rd but now I intend to stay in Itikaf for the last ten days (of the month); so whoever was in Itikaf with me should stay at his place of seclusion. I have verily been shown (the date of) this Night (of Qadr) but I have forgotten it. So search for it in the odd nights of the last ten days (of this month). I also saw myself (in the dream) prostrating in mud and water." On the night of the 21st, the sky was covered with clouds and it rained, and the rain-water started leaking through the roof of the mosque at the praying place of the Prophet . I saw with my own eyes the Prophet at the completion of the morning prayer leaving with his face covered with mud and water.

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236 Narrated 'Aisha: The Prophet said, "Look for (the Night of Qadr)."

237 Narrated 'Aisha: Allah's Apostle used to practice Itikaf in the last ten nights of Ramadan and used to say, "Look for the Night of Qadr in the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan ,"

238 Narrated Ibn Abbas: The Prophet said, "Look for the Night of Qadr in the last ten nights of Ramadan , ' on the night when nine or seven or five nights remain out of the last ten nights of Ramadan (i.e. 21, 23, 25, respectively)."

239 Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: Allah's Apostle said, "The Night of Qadr is in the last ten nights of the month (Ramadan), either on the first nine or in the last (remaining) seven nights (of Ramadan)." Ibn 'Abbas added, "Search for it on the twenty-fourth (of Ramadan)."

240 Narrated 'Ubada bin As-Samit: The Prophet came out to inform us about the Night of Qadr but two Muslims were quarreling with each other. So, the Prophet said, "I came out to inform you about the Night of Qadr but such-and-such persons were quarreling, so the news about it had been taken away; yet that might be for your own good, so search for it on the 29th, 27th and 25th (of Ramadan).

241 Narrated Aisha: With the start of the last ten days of Ramadan, the Prophet used to tighten his waist belt (i.e. work hard) and used to pray all the night, and used to keep his family awake for the prayers.

Umrah in (that month) is equivalent to Hajj." Al-Bukhari (1782) and Muslim (1256) narrated that Ibn Abbaas said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to a woman from among the Ansaar – Ibn Abbaas mentioned her name but I forgot it – "What kept you from performing Hajj with us?" She said: We only have two camels and the father of her son and her son had gone for Hajj on one camel, and he left us the other camel so that we could carry water on it. He said: "When Ramadan comes, go for Umrah, for Umrah in (that month) is equivalent to Hajj."

Narrated Abu Huraira: Some poor people came to the Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alayhi Wassalam and said, "The wealthy people will get higher grades and will have permanent enjoyment, and they offer Salaah (prayer) like us and observe Sawm (fast) as we do. They have more money by which they perform the Hajj, and 'Umrah; fight and struggle in Allah's Cause and give in charity." The Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alayhi Wassalam said, "Shall I not tell you a thing upon which if you acted you would catch up with those who have surpassed you? Nobody would overtake you and you would be better than the people amongst whom you live except those who would do the same. Say SubhanAllah, Alhamdulillah and Allahu Akbar thirty three times each after every (compulsory) Salaah (prayer)." We differed and some of us said that we should say, SubhanAllah thirty three times Alhamdulillah thirty three times and Allahu Akbar thirty four times. I went to the Prophet Muhammad (sal-allahu-alleihi-wasallam) who said, "Say, Subhan Allah and Alhamdulillah and Allahu Akbar all of them thirty three times." [Sahih Bukhari; Hadith No. 479]

"All Glory be to Allaah"

"All praise be to Allaah"

"Allaah is greater"

Du'a after Salaah

"None has the right to be worshiped but Allaah alone, He has no partner, His is the dominion and His is the praise, and He is Able to do all things. O Allaah, there is none who can withhold what You give, and none may give what You have withheld; and the might of the mighty person cannot benefit him against You"

Our Beloved SalAllahu Alaihi Wasallam, said:

The Prophet Muhammad said, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him: Your Heaven lies under the feet of your mother (Ahmad, Nasai).

Mu'awiyah ibn Jahima (RadhiAllahu 'anhu) reported,

Jahima (RadhiAllahu 'anhu) came to the Prophet ﷺ and he said:

"O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, I intend to join the expedition and I seek your advice."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Do you have a mother?"

He said, "Yes."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Stay with her, for verily Paradise is beneath her feet."

[Sunan An-Nasa'i, Book of Jihad, Number 3104]

2. A man came to the Prophet and said, 'O Messenger of God! Who among the people is the most worthy of my good companionship? The Prophet said: Your mother. The man said, 'Then who?' The Prophet said: Then your mother. The man further asked, 'Then who?' The Prophet said: Then your mother. The man asked again, 'Then who?' The Prophet said: Then your father. (Bukhari, Muslim).
3. Abu Usaid Saidi said: We were once sitting with Rasulullah when a man from the tribe of Salmah came and said to him: O Messenger of Allah! do my parents have rights over me even after they have died? And Rasulullah said: Yes. You must pray to Allah to bless them with His Forgiveness and Mercy, fulfill the promises they made to anyone, and respect their relations and their friends (Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah).
4. Abdullah ibn Amr related that the Messenger of Allah said: The major sins are to believe that Allah has partners, to disobey one's parents, to commit murder, and to bear false witness (Bukhari, Muslim).
5. It is narrated by Asma bint Abu Bakr that during the treaty of Hudaibiyah, her mother, who was then pagan, came to see her from Makkah. Asma informed the Messenger of Allah of her arrival and also that she needed help. He said: Be good to your mother (Bukhari, Muslim).

Our Beloved SalAllahu Alaihi Wasallam, said:

1. "Whoever meets Allah without ascribing anything to Him will enter Jannah." [Bukhari]
2. "Whoever believes (has Imaan) in Allah and His Messenger (sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam), and establishes the prayer and fasts the month of Ramadan, it is incumbent upon Allah that He enters him in Jannah." [Bukhari]
3. "Whoever builds a masjid seeking by it the Pleasure of Allah, Allah will build for him a similar place in Jannah." [Bukhari]
4. "Whoever prays the two cool prayers (Asr and Fajr) will enter Jannah." [Bukhari]
5. "Whoever goes to the masjid (every) morning and in the afternoon (for the congregational prayer), Allah will prepare for him an honorable place in Jannah with good hospitality for (what he has done) every morning and afternoon goings." [Bukhari]
6. "Whoever can guarantee (the chastity of) what is between his two jaw-bones and what is between his two legs (i.e. his tongue and his private parts), I guarantee Jannah for him." [Bukhari]
7. "Whoever prays 12 rakaat in the day and night, a house in Jannah will be built for him." [Muslim]
8. "Whoever treads a path in search of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him the path to Jannah." [Bukhari]
9. "Whoever repeats after the muadhdhin from his heart (i.e., sincerely) will enter Jannah." [Abu Dawud]
10. "There is not one of you who perfects his wudu and prays two rakaat setting about them with his heart as well as his face except that Jannah would be mandatory for him." [Abu Dawud]
11. Whoever says: "I am pleased with Allah as my Rabb, and with Islam as my Deen, and with Muhammad (sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam) as my Prophet, Jannah would be mandatory for him." [Abu Dawud]
12. "Whosoever last words are: laa ilaaha il Allah, will enter Paradise." [Abu Dawud, Saheeh]
13. Whoever says "SubhanAllah al-Adheem wa biHamdihi, Glorified and Exalted is Allah, The Great, and with His Praise", a date-palm will planted for him in Jannah." [Tirmidhi]
14. "Whoever dies and is free from three: arrogance, grudges and debt will enter Jannah." [Tirmidhi]

15. “Whoever raises two girls, he and I will enter Jannah.” [Tirmidhi]

16. “Whoever calls the adhan for 12 years, Jannah will become mandatory for him.” [ibn Maajah]

17. Whoever asks Allah for Jannah three times, Jannah will say: “O Allah, enter him into Jannah.” [Tirmidhi]

18. “Whoever visits an ailing person or a brother of his to seek the Pleasure of Allah, an announcer (angel) calls out: May you be happy, may your walking be blessed, and may you be awarded a dignified position in Jannah.” [Tirmidhi]

19. “Indeed, truthfulness leads to righteousness and indeed righteousness leads to Jannah.” [Bukhari]

20. “Allah guarantees him who strives in His Cause and whose motivation for going out is nothing but Jihad in His Cause and belief in His Word, that He will admit him into Jannah.” [Bukhari]

21. “O people, spread the salaam (greetings), feed the hungry, and pray while the people are asleep, you will enter Jannah in peace.” [Tirmidhi]

22. “(The performance of) Umrah is an expiation for the sins committed between it and the previous Umrah; and the reward of Hajj Mabrur (i.e., one accepted) is nothing but Jannah.” [Bukhari]

23. “Allah has ninety-nine Names, one hundred minus one, and whoever believes in their meanings and acts accordingly, will enter Jannah.” [Bukhari]

24. “I saw a man going about in Jannah (and enjoying himself) as a reward for cutting from the middle of the road, a tree which was causing inconvenience to the Muslims.” [Muslim]

25. “If somebody recites this invocation during the day, and if he should die then, he will be from the people of Jannah. And if he recites it in the night, and if he should die on the same day, he will be from the people of Jannah.” [Bukhari]

“Allahumma anta Rabbi la ilaha illa anta Khalaqtani wa ana ‘abduka, wa ana ‘ala ‘ahdika wa Wa’dika mastata’tu abu’u Laka bi ni ‘matika wa abu’u Laka bidhanbi; faghfirli fa’innahu la yaghfiru-dh-dhunuba illa a anta. A’uidhu bika min sharri ma sana’tu, abu’u Laka bini’matika ‘alaiya, wa Abu Laka bidhanbi faghfirli innahu la yaghfiru adhdhunuba illa anta”

THE QURAN PROVES WATER CAME FROM ROCKS FROM THE SPACE (by FAISAL) Scientists don't know for sure. Perhaps the most popular theory says that, shortly after the Earth formed, millions of asteroids and comets, saturated in water, slammed into the planet, releasing their payloads to form Earth's oceans. Scientists are working hard to understand more about what our planet was like billions of years ago, and each new piece of information moves us closer to understanding how Earth's oceans, lakes and rivers came to exist. But the Quran already has the answer because the Quran is more superior than science & it's the only 100% true book of God's words. Thenceforth were your hearts hardened: They became like a rock and even worse in hardness. For among rocks there are some from which rivers gush forth; others there are which when split asunder send forth water; and others which sink for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unmindful of what ye do. 2:74 al-Baqarah Verse: 74 AL-QURAN.

Surah Al-Baqarah is the longest surah of the Quran and the prophet (s.a.w.) highlighted many of its benefits in general and some of its specific benefits. For example, the prophet (s.a.w.) told us that its recitation in a house keeps the Satan away. Abu Hurayrah reports that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) said: “*Do not make your houses like graves, for the Shaytan runs away from a house in which Surat al-Baqarah is recited*” (narrated by Muslim, 780). As most of the spiritual ailments such as evil eye, jinn possession, and black magic are satanic in nature, keeping Satan away can also help both in the treatment of such conditions and as a preventive measure.

The Blessings of Aayat al-Kursiy

Ayat-ul-Kursi is verse 255 of Surah Al-Bqarah and is related to Allah's throne. This Quranic verse has many blessings and is used for ruqyah treatment, the treatment of evil eye, black magic, and also for general and comprehensive protection.

اَللّٰهُ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّوْمُ لَا تَاْخُذُهٗ سِنَةٌ
وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَّهٗ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا
الَّذِى يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهٗ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِهٖ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ
اَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُوْنَ بِشَيْءٍ
مِّنْ عِلْمِهٖ اِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهٗ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُوْدُهٗ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِىُّ
الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٢٥٥﴾ سورة البقرة

The blessings of this verse is apparent from this hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah. He said:

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) put me in charge of guarding the zakaah of Ramadaan. Someone came to me and started grabbing (taking illegally) handful of the food. I took hold of him and said, 'I will take you to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.).' He said, 'I will teach you some words by means of which Allah will benefit you.' I said, 'What are they?' He said, 'When you go to your bed, recite this aayah: "Allah! Laa ilaaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), Al-Hayyul-Qayyoom (the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists)..." [Surah al-Baqarah, 2:255]. Then Allah will appoint a guard for you who will stay with you and no Shaytan (devil) will come near you until morning.' The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) asked me, 'What did your prisoner do last night?' I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, he taught me something, and claimed that Allah would benefit me by it.' He said, 'What was it?' I said, 'He taught me to recite Aayat al-Kursiy when I go to bed, and said that no Shaytan would come near me until morning, and that Allah would appoint a guard for me who would stay with me.' The prophet (s.a.w.) said, 'He told you the truth, although he is an inveterate liar. That was the Shaytan' [narrated by al-Bukhaari, 3101; Muslim, 505].

The Blessings of Last Verses of Surah Al-Baqarah

The last verses of Surah Al-Baqarah are one of the most memorized and recited Quranic verses among Muslims and that is for a good reason. Consider the saying of the prophet (s.a.w.) about the last verses of the Surah.

"Whoever recites the last two verses of Surat al-Baqarah at night, it will suffice him'" (According to Abu Masood al-Ansaari and narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4723; Muslim, 807).

The Prophet (s.a.w.) also said the following:

"Allah inscribed a book two thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth, from which the last two verses of Surat al-Baqarah were revealed. If they are recited for three nights, no Shaytan (devil) will remain in the house) (narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 2882). This hadeeth was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami' (1799).

ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ
 وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِاللّهِ وَمَلَكِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ
 وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ
 وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۚ غُفْرَانُكَ رَبَّنَا
 وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨٥﴾
 لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ
 وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا
 أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إَصْرًا
 كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا
 وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ ۚ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا
 وَارْحَمْنَا ۚ أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا
 عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٨٦﴾ سورة البقرة

285. The Messenger (Muhammad) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. (They say), "We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers" – and they say, "We hear, and we obey. (We seek) Your Forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the return (of all)."

286. Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned. "Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error, our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which You did lay on those before us (Jews and Christians); our Lord! Put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us and grant us Forgiveness. Have mercy on us. You are our Maula (Patron, Supporter and Protector, etc.) and give us victory over the disbelieving people." *Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah (185:186)*

"Allah sends His Salaah (Graces, Blessings, Mercy) on the Prophet (Muhammad), and also His angels (Angels ask Allah to bless and forgive him). O you who believe! send your Salah on (ask Allaah to bless) him (Muhammad), and greet him with the Islamic way of greeting (salutation, i.e. As?Salaamu 'Alaykum)" [Quran: al-Ahzaab 33:56]

Sending blessings on the prophet is so vital that in one of the hadeeth, acceptance of our Dua is made dependant on it. According to a hadith by 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: Dua is suspended between heaven and earth and none of it is taken up until you send blessings upon your Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)." (Classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi). Sending blessings mean to read or say Darood Ibrahim :

ALLAHUMMA SALLI ALA MUHAMMADIW WA ALA AALI MUHAMMADIN KAMAA SALLAITA ALA IBRAHIMA WA ALA AALI IBRAHIMA INNAKA HAMIDUM MAJID. ALLAHUMMA BAARIK ALA MUHAMMADIW WA ALA AALI MUHAMMADIN KAMAA BAARAKTA ALA IBRAHIMA WA ALA AALI IBRAHIMA INNAKA HAMIDUM MAJID.

Allahumma! Send blessings upon (Holy Prophet) Muhammad and upon the followers of (Holy Prophet) Muhammad as You sent blessings upon Ibraheem and upon the followers of Ibraheem; indeed, You are praiseworthy and glorious. Allahumma! Bless (Holy Prophet) Muhammad and the follower of (Holy Prophet) Muhammad as You blessed Ibraheem and the follower of Ibraheem; indeed, You are praise worthy and glorious.

Note :

The famous companion of the Prophet (Sallal Laahu Alaihi Wasallim), Hazrat Ka'ab bin Ujrah (radi Allahu anhu), narrates that once it was enquired from Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (Sallal Laahu Alaihi Wasallim) as to how blessings should be sent to him. The Prophet (Sallal Laahu Alaihi Wasallim) replied that the blessings be said in the manner (it has been mentioned) above, that is, Durood-e-Ibrahimi.

Best Times to make Dua (Supplication) While Prostrating

Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that Allah's Messenger (SAW), said: 'The nearest a slave can be to his Lord is when he is prostrating, so invoke (supplicate) Allah (SWT) much in it. [Muslim, abu Dawud, an-Nasa'i and others, Sahih al-Jami #1175]

When a Muslim is in his Salat (prayer) he is facing Allah (SWT) and when he prostrates he is the nearest he can be to Allah (SWT) so it is best to invoke Allah (SWT) at this time.

The Last Third Of The Night

Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: 'In the last third of every night our Rabb (Cherisher and Sustainer) (Allah (SWT)) descends to the lowermost heaven and says; "Who is calling Me, so that I may answer him? Who is asking Me so that may I grant him? Who is seeking forgiveness from Me so that I may forgive him?." [Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith Qudsi]

Amr ibn Absah narrated that the Prophet said: 'The closest any worshipper can be to His Lord is during the last part of the night, so if you can be amongst those who remember Allah at that time, then do so.' [at-Tirmidhi, an-Nasa'i, al-Hakim - Sahih]

The Night Of 'Qadr' (Decree)

This night is the greatest night of the year. This is the night which the almighty Allah (SWT) said about it, "The night of Al-Qadar (Decree) is better than a thousand months." [Surah al-Qadr, 97: 3]

The Night of Decree is one of the odd nights of the last ten nights of the blessed month of Ramadan. The angels descend down to the earth, and the earth is overwhelmed with peace and serenity until the break of dawn and when the doors of Paradise are opened, the worshipper is encouraged to turn to Allah to ask for his needs for this world and the Hereafter.

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The benefits of Salah the prayer performed in the Islamic way. This book describes both the worldly and spiritual benefits of Salah/salat/namaz.

The benefits of Salah the prayer performed in the Islamic way.

The benefits of Salah/salat/prayer performed in Islamic way. There are many benefits of Salah. There are 3 categories of the benefits of performing the Salah/salat/prayer/namaz. 1st is the physical benefits because it's like exercising such as causing movements in the human body during performing the prayer or Salah in Islam. 2nd is the spiritual and mental wellbeing that connects with performing the Islamic prayer/Salah/salat/namaz. When a Muslim bows his head to god on the floor, this increases the blood flow in the brain and it's done in a short period of time and it's temporary so it's good for the brain and mental health. Research shows praying the Islamic Salah can help mental wellbeing. 3rd is it connects with god spiritually which gives Muslims unlimited sawabs and rewards which will help a Muslim enter jannah/heaven in akhirat/here after which is the final life after death and its forever. So Salah can keep a person both mentally and physically fit as well as it will also help believers enter heaven because Muslims are fulfilling the commands of Allah and the purpose of life by worshiping & praying the mandatory the must pray the Salah's 5times a day by saying some verses of the holy Quran, remembering and connecting with the only true 1 god Allah the creator of all and everything.

God is only 1 who is for forever and there is no other god but Allah, there was no other god but Allah & there will be no other god but Allah and since god is 1 so god's religion is also 1. the message of god and Islam is always the same that there is only 1 god who has no partners no beginning nor end but god is for forever and Moses Jesus Muhammad are only prophets messengers of the same 1 god & the message is same that god is 1 without any partners like no father mother son daughter etc. God is most superior beyond our imagination & there is nothing comparable to god. science and history proves torah & bibles are changed corrupted .so god Allah sent the last revelation the Quran through angel Gabriel to last prophet Muhammad and since all other revelations have changed by humanity, Allah promised to keep the Quran same until the end times. False religions lead to hell but Islam is only way to heaven. So there isn't and will not be another god besides Allah & Moses Jesus Muhammad are only prophets messengers of Allah and Islam the only true religion. So Allah & Allah's religion Islam are for forever. This is the truth and this is Islam. Thank you for reading.

Some Optional Prayers Sunnah Mu'akkadah with the five Obligatory Prayers of Islam

1097. Umm Habibah (May Allah be pleased with her) the Mother of the Believers reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) saying, "A house will be built in Jannah for every Muslim who offers twelve Rak'ah of optional Salat other than the obligatory Salat in a day and a night (to seek the Pleasure of Allah)."

[Muslim].

Commentary: Tatawwu' means to offer more Nawafil (optional prayers) on one's own after performing the Faraid (obligatory prayers). Thus, this Hadith tells us the merits of optional prayers and holds promise of (Jannah) for those who make it a practice.

1098. Ibn 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: I performed along with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) two Rak'ah of optional prayers before Zuhr and two after the Zuhr (noon prayer), and two after the Friday prayer, and two after the Maghrib (evening) prayer, and two after the 'Isha' (night) prayer."

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Commentary: There are two kinds of Nawafil which are performed before or after the obligatory prayer. Firstly, the one which were performed by the Prophet (PBUH) more frequently. According to the present Hadith, their total comes to ten Rak'ah while in other Ahadith their total is twelve or fourteen Rak'ah. They are called Sunnah Mu'akkadah or As-Sunnan Ar-Rawatib That is, the Rak'ah which are proved from the saying and practice of the Prophet (PBUH) and which were performed by him usually. These are said to be Compulsory prayers. Secondly, such Nawafil which were not performed by the Prophet (PBUH) regularly. These are called Sunnah Ghair Mu'akkadah and are said to be Optional prayers. In any case, Nawafil have great importance in creating a special link between the worshipper and Allah, and for this reason the believers do not neglect them. But their status in Shari'ah is of Nawafil the performing of which is rewarding and omission of which is not sinful. One thing that should be borne in mind in respect of As-Sunnan Ar-Rawatib or Mu'akkadah is that it is better to perform them at home. This was the usual practice of the Prophet (PBUH), and this is what he ordained the Muslims.

1099. `Abdullah bin Mughaffal (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "There is a Salat (prayer) between every Adhan and Iqamah; there is a Salat between every Adhan and Iqamah." (While saying the same for the third time (he (PBUH) added), "It is for him who desires (to perform it)."

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Commentary: The two Adhan here means Adhan and Iqamah, as has been elucidated by Imam An-Nawawi. That is, offering of two Rak'ah between Adhan and Iqamah is Mustahabb (desirable). It comes in the category of Ghair Ratiba or Ghair Mu'akkadah Nawafil. These Nawafil can be performed after the Adhan of every Salat before the congregation stands for the obligatory Salat.

Emphasis on Performing two Rak'ah Sunnah before Dawn (Fajr) Prayer

1100. `Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Prophet (PBUH) never omitted four Rak'ah prayer before the Zuhr prayer and two Rak'ah prayers before dawn (Fajr) prayer.

[Al-Bukhari].

Commentary: This Hadith tells us the practice of the Prophet (PBUH) in respect of the four Rak'ah Sunnah of Zuhr prayers and the two of Fajr prayers. He (PBUH) used to perform both regularly. Such Rak'ah are called Sunnah Rawatib or Sunnah Mu'akkadah (compulsory prayers).

1101. `Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Prophet (PBUH) did not attach more importance to any Nawafil prayer than the two Rak`ah of prayer before dawn (Fajr) prayer.
[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Commentary: This Hadith tell us about the special preparation which the Prophet (PBUH) used to make for performing the two Rak`ah of Fajr prayers.

1102. `Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Prophet (PBUH) said, "The two Rak`ah before the dawn (Fajr) prayer are better than this world and all it contains."
[Muslim]

Another narration goes: "The two Rak`ah before the dawn (Fajr) prayer are dearer to me than the whole world."

Commentary: This Hadith tells us the merits of the two Rak`ah of Fajr prayers.

All the Ahadith mentioned above prove that the two Rak`ah of Fajr are highly meritorious, and one should not show any slackness or negligence in offering them.

1103. Abu `Abdullah Bilal bin Rabah (May Allah be pleased with him) the Mu'adhdhin of Messenger of Allah (PBUH) reported: I went to inform the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) about the time of the dawn (Fajr) prayer, and `Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) kept me busy and began to ask me about something till the day grew bright. Then I got up and informed the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) of the time of Salat. I informed him again but he did not came out immediately to lead As-Salat. When he came out, he led As-Salat. I said to him: `Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) kept me busy and thus diverted my attention by asking about something and the morning grew bright. You also came out late. Upon that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "I was engaged in performing two Rak`ah of Fajr prayer." Bilal (May Allah be pleased with him)said: "O Messenger of Allah! You delayed As-Salat so long as the morning grew bright." He (PBUH) replied, "Even if the morning had become brighter than it had, I would have performed two Rak`ah of prayer in an excellent manner."

[Abu Dawud].

Commentary: This Hadith also tells us about the importance of the two Rak`ah of Fajr prayers and stresses the need to perform them with full concentration.

Briefness to be Adopted in Performing the two Rak'ah Sunnah before Fajr Prayer, their time and the Surah to recite in them

1104. `Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Prophet (PBUH) used to perform two Rak`ah short prayer between the Adhan (call to prayer) and the Iqamah of the dawn (Fajr) prayers.

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

In another narration, `Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) said: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to perform two supererogatory Rak`ah prayer of Fajr and make them so short in duration that I used to think whether he (PBUH) had recited Surat Al-Fatihah (in it) or not.

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

In the narration of Muslim, `Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) said: When the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to hear the Adhan (of Fajr prayer) he would perform two supererogatory Rak`ah prayer and would make them short.

Commentary: "Takhfif" here means that the Prophet (PBUH) used to shorten the standing, recitation, bowing, prostration, etc., in the two Rak`ah of Fajr prayer because soon after performing them he had to lead the Fajr prayer in which he would prolong his recitation. He would also offer these two Sunnah soon after the daybreak or Adhan, which gives an idea of the preparation he made for them.

1105. Hafsa (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to perform two short Rak`ah prayer when it was dawn and the Mu'adhdhin had called Adhan (for the Fajr prayer).

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Commentary: This Hadith tells us that the two Rak`ah of Fajr prayer should be performed after the daybreak not before it. One should also be brief in these two Rak`ah so that he is active and alert for performing the Fard (obligatory prayer).

1106. Ibn `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to perform his optional night prayers at night, two Rak`ah followed by two Rak`ah, and at the end

he would conclude with an odd Rak`ah (Witr). Then he would perform two Rak`ah prayer before the dawn (Fajr) prayer after hearing the Adhan, and he would make them so brief as if he could hear the Iqamah being called.

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Commentary: "As if he could hear the Iqamah being called" here means that he would hasten the two Rak`ah of Fajr prayer to the point that one had the impression that he was hearing the voice of Iqamah and he was making haste for fear of missing of the Salat.

This Hadith also makes the following three points:

- 1.The optional prayer of the night should be offered in a series of two Rak`ah.
- 2.One Rak`ah of Witr is also correct.
- 3.The Sunnah of Fajr prayer should be offered soon after the Adhan, and one should be brief in them.

1107. Ibn `Abbas (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to recite during the two Rak`ah of Fajr prayer: "Say (O Muslims): We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us..." (2:136) which is in Surat Al-Baqarah in the first Rak`ah and the Verse: "We believe in Allah, and bear witness that we are Muslims (i.e., we submit to Allah." (3:52) in the second Rak`ah.

According to another narration, he (PBUH) recited from Surat Al-`Imran the Verses: "Come to a word which is just between us and you..." (3:64).

[Muslim].

Commentary: In the two Sunnah of Fajr prayer, the Prophet (PBUH) used to recite the two short Verses mentioned in this Hadith, after Surat Al-Fatihah.

1108. Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) recited in the two supererogatory Rak`ah of the Fajr prayer Surat Al-Kafirun (No. 109) [in the first Rak`ah], and Surat Al-Ikhlâs (No. 112) [in the second Rak`ah].

[Muslim].

1109. Ibn `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: I observed the Prophet (PBUH) for one month reciting in the two supererogatory Rak`ah of the Fajr prayer Surat Al-Kafirun (No. 109) [in the first Rak`ah], and Surat Al-Ikhlâs (No. 112) [in the second Rak`ah].

[At-Tirmidhi].

Commentary: One can recite any Surah or Ayah in the two Sunnah of Fajr prayer, but if one recites the Verses mentioned in this Hadith, he will have the benefit of following the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). Every Muslim should strive to follow the practice of the Prophet (PBUH) for the enrichment of his mind, soul and actions.

Sunnah of Zuhr Prayer

1113. Ibn `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: I performed with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) two Rak`ah before and two after Zuhr prayers.

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Commentary: This Hadith has already been mentioned. See Commentary on Hadith No. 1098.

1114. `Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Prophet (PBUH) never omitted four Rak`ah supererogatory prayer before Zuhr prayers.

[Al-Bukhari].

Commentary: Some Ahadith state that he (PBUH) used to perform two Rak`ah before and two after Zuhr prayer. The present Hadith says that he used to perform four Rak`ah before Zuhr prayer. Both narrations are correct and can be followed according to conditions and circumstances.

1115. `Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: Whenever the Prophet (PBUH) stayed in my house, he would perform four Rak`ah (supererogatory prayer) before Zuhr prayer. Then he would go out and lead Salat. He (PBUH) would then come back and perform two Rak`ah (supererogatory prayer). He would lead the Maghrib prayer and come back and perform two Rak`ah (supererogatory prayer). When he (PBUH) had led the `Isha' prayer, he would enter the house and perform two Rak`ah (supererogatory prayer).

[Muslim]

1116. Umm Habibah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "Whoever observes the practice of performing four Rak'ah before Zuhr prayer and four after the Zuhr prayer, Allah will shield him against the Fire (of Hell).

[Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi].

Commentary: This Ahadith mean that a person who follows this course of practice, will die as a Muslim and will not remain in Hell for ever like the Kuffar (infidels) unless Allah has forgiven all his sins for him and would, as a result, save him from Fire altogether. That is, Almighty Allah will not let him live in Hell for ever. According to some Ahadith, the fire of Hell will not touch him, which also amounts to saying that he will not be kept in Hell for all eternity. If a Muslim is liable to punishment, his stay in Hell - for a few days or weeks or months depending on the nature of his sins - is not a contravention of such Ahadith because he will ultimately be released from Hell and brought to Jannah. "Allah will shield him against the Fire" should not be taken to mean that a Muslim will not be sent to Hell no matter what he does. If Almighty Allah does not forgive him in the very first instance, he will have to suffer the torment of Hell as long as He would like and then he will be sent to Jannah.

1117. `Abdullah bin As-Sa'ib (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to perform four Rak'ah prayer after the declining of the sun before Zuhr prayer and would say, "This is an hour at which the gates of heaven are opened, and I like that my good deeds should rise to heaven at that time."

[At-Tirmidhi].

Commentary: The Prophet (PBUH) used to perform the four Rak'ah Sunnah of Zuhr prayer when the sun started declining. In fact, except for `Isha' prayer, he would perform every Salat at its early hours.

The phrase "the gates of heaven are opened" to means that the good deeds that people do are lifted to heavens at that time.

1118. `Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: If the Prophet (PBUH) could not perform four Rak'ah before Zuhr prayer, he would perform them after it (i.e., after the obligatory prayer).

[At-Tirmidhi].

Commentary: This Hadith tells us about the preparation which the Prophet (PBUH) used to make for performing the Sunnah. Every Muslim should, therefore, make full preparation for performing Sunnah. If one is unable to perform it before the Fard prayer, then one must do it afterwards.

Sunnah of the 'Asr Prayer

1119. `Ali bin Abu Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (PBUH) used to perform four Rak'ah before the `Asr prayer, separating them with Taslim (i.e., offering blessings) on the favourite angels who are near Allah's proximity and the Muslims and the believers who come after them.

[At-Tirmidhi].

Commentary: The phrase "separating them with Taslim" means that he would perform four Rak'ah in two couplets.

1120. Ibn `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: The Prophet (PBUH) said, "May Allah have mercy on a man who performs four Rak'ah before the `Asr prayer."

[Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi].

Commentary: These four Rak'ah can be performed in two couplets also, as was the practice of the Prophet (PBUH), according to the preceding Hadith. It can be performed with one Taslim also. Both forms are correct and permissible. Some scholars are of the opinion that the former method is better. `Ulama' have stated that these four Sunnah of `Asr prayer are Ghair Mu'akkadah (optional prayers). Its importance is however evident from the fact that the Prophet (PBUH) prayed for mercy on those who performed these Sunnah.

1121. `Ali bin Abu Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (PBUH) used to perform two Rak'ah before the `Asr prayer.

[Abu Dawud].

Commentary: We learn from this Hadith that one can also perform two Sunnah before `Asr prayer. But Sheikh Al-Albani has stated that the word "two Rak'ah" occurring in this Hadith is rare. Four Rak'ah are secure and should, therefore, be preferred.

Sunnah of the Maghrib Prayer

[In the previous chapter, the practice of the Prophet (PBUH) has been reported by `Umar and `Aishah (May Allah be pleased with them) that he (PBUH) used to perform two Rak`ah Sunnah after the obligatory Maghrib prayer].

1122. `Abdullah bin Mughaffal (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Perform two Rak`ah before Maghrib prayer." He (PBUH) repeated it twice; when repeating it for the third time he added: "He who may so wish."

[Al-Bukhari].

Commentary: This Salat means that the two Rak`ah are performed after the Adhan of Maghrib prayer but before the Fard Salat. This is elucidated by other Ahadith. Although this has the position of Sunnah Ghair Mu`akkadah, its importance is evident from the fact that the Prophet (PBUH) stressed it three times. Usually an order (Amr) signifies that the act is "essential" but here the decency embedded in the words "He who may so wish" has turned it to "desirable". In any case, inducement and stress of the Prophet (PBUH) on this Salat has left no room to doubt that it is desirable. Ahadith which follow lend further support to this contention.

1123. Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: I saw the principal Companions of Messenger of Allah (PBUH) rushing to the pillars (of the mosque) to perform two Rak`ah prayers behind them before the Maghrib prayer.

[Al-Bukhari].

Commentary: "Rushing to the pillars" here refers to the haste which the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) usually showed in occupying the place near the pillars to perform the two Rak`ah before Maghrib prayer. Thus, this Hadith confirms the practice of the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) in respect of the two Rak`ah performed before Maghrib prayer.

1124. Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: In the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), we used to perform two Rak`ah (optional prayer) after sunset before the Maghrib prayer. It was asked: "Did Messenger of Allah (PBUH) perform them?" He replied: "He saw us performing it, but he neither ordered us to perform them nor did he forbid us from doing so."

[Muslim].

Commentary: This Hadith mentions the practice of the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) in respect of two Rak`ah performed before Maghrib prayer. They sometimes performed these Rak`ah in the presence of the Prophet (PBUH). Thus according to the narration of Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) their being in practice is proved. But this statement of Anas is according to his own knowledge, otherwise, we have already seen a Hadith in which the Prophet (PBUH) stressed the need to perform them by way of inducement. Thus, it is proved by his speech as well.

1125. Anas bin Malik (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: When we were in Al-Madinah, the moment the Mu`adhdhin finished the Adhan of the Maghrib prayer, the people hastened to the pillars of the mosque and performed two Rak`ah prayer behind them. A stranger coming into the mosque would think that the obligatory prayer had already been performed because of the number of people performing them.

[Muslim].

Commentary: This Hadith shows that it was usual with the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) to perform two Rak`ah before Maghrib in the Prophet's mosque. But in spite of this fact these are Sunnah Ghair Mu`akkadah while the two performed after the Salat are Sunnah Mu`akkadah.

Sunnah of the 'Isha' Prayer

[Ibn `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) has narrated that he performed two Rak`ah after the Fard prayer of 'Isha' with the Prophet (PBUH). `Abdullah bin Mughaffal has narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) has said, "There is a Salat between every Takbir and Adhan."

This proves that apart from the four Rak`ah Fard, there are also two Rak`ah Sunnah of the `Isha' prayer). See Ahadith No. 1098 and 1099.

Sunnah of Friday Prayer

`Abdullah bin `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: I performed along with the Prophet (PBUH) two Rak`ah (Sunnah prayer) after the Jumu'ah prayer.

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

1126. Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "If anyone of you performs the Friday prayer, he should perform four Rak`ah (Sunnah) after

it."

[Muslim].

1127. Ibn `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: The Prophet (PBUH) would not perform any Salat (in the mosque) after the Friday prayer till he had returned to his house. He would then perform two Rak`ah there.

[Muslim].

Commentary: In one Hadith, there is mention of four Rak`ah, while in the other it is mentioned as two Rak`ah. It can be deduced that both of these are acceptable. `Ulama' are of the opinion that one who performs them in the mosque, should perform four Rak`ah; whereas the one performing them at home, should perform two Rak`ah with one Taslim. It is better to perform them in twos as the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said, "Perform the Nawafil of the day and night in twos." (Al-Bukhari).

Desirability of offering Nawfil (Voluntary or Optional) Prayers at Home

1128. Zaid bin Thabit (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (PBUH) said, "O people! perform your (voluntary) Salat (prayers) in your homes because the best Salat of a man is the one he performs at home, except the obligatory Salat."

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Commentary: This Hadith tells us that the Nawafil and Sunnah prayers should be performed at home. It goes without saying that all the Fard constituents of every Salat are to be performed in the mosque (Masjid) in congregation. The order to perform the Nawafil prayers at home shows its merits. Firstly, it saves a person from showing off, and secondly, houses are blessed due to them.

1129. Ibn `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Observe part of the [Nawafil (voluntary)] Salat (prayers) in your homes. Do not turn your homes into graves."

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Commentary: "Observe part of the Salat (prayers) in your homes" here means Nawafil and Sunnah. The houses in which Nawafil are not performed are like graveyards. Such houses are like graves which have no scope for action and worship and are thus deprived of their reward, which is a great deprivation indeed.

1130. Jabir (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "When you have finished your (Fard) Salat (prayer) in the mosque, you should observe some of your (Sunnah and Nawafil) Salat at home; Allah will bless your homes because of your Salat (in your homes)."

[Muslim]

Commentary: This Hadith has the same message which is conveyed by the preceding Ahadith namely that the Fard Salat should be performed in the Masjid (mosque) while some of the supererogatory, optional and voluntary prayers should be performed at home.

1131. `Umar bin `Ata reported that Nafi` bin Jubair sent him to Sa'ib bin Ukht Namir to ask him about something that Mu`awiyah had seen him doing in Salat (prayer). He said: "Yes, I performed the Friday prayer along with him in the enclosure (Maqsurah), and when the Imam concluded the Salat with Taslim, I stood up in my place and performed the Sunnah prayer. When Mu`awiyah went home, he sent for me (and when I came) he said: "Never do again what you have done. When you have observed the Friday prayer, you must not start another Sunnah prayer till you have spoken to some one or have shifted your place; because the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) ordered us not to follow up the congregational Salat with any other Salat until we have talked (to some one) or moved from the place."

[Muslim].

Commentary: "Maqsurah" was an enclosure in a mosque or a place which was made there for the security of rulers. When Muslim caliphs and rulers used to perform their prayers in congregation, they would occupy this place. The word "Friday" (Jumu`ah) has been mentioned here because of the incident reported in it, otherwise, this order applies to every Salat and is not restricted to Jumu`ah alone. There is a standing order that one must separate the Fard and the

Sunnah of a Salat by some means, like thikr, conversation, changing place of the Salat, going out of the Masjid, etc.

First Amendment: FREEDOM OF SPEECH!

The only reason Israel belongs to the Jews now is because the Torah or Old Testament says God gave Israel to the Jews. And both Christians and Jews believe in this bible and they also believe they are the chosen people. so they have driven the Muslims out of their homes & lands & gave it to the Jews. Which is the main reason why the terrorists attacked America on 9/11? The terrorist have said their reason for this was the American support for creating Israel and continuing their support even when the Jews were bombing the schools, hospitals, homes of Palestine.

Nothing justifies terrorism or revenge and Islam had nothing to do with 9/11. It was an act of the evil of the human nature which is to seek revenge. After 9/11 revenge was the cause of war on Afghanistan & greed for oil was the cause of war on Iraq so the weapons of mass destruction / nuclear weapon whatever they said Iraq has before the war was never found because it was only a false accusation and propaganda only. **The Glorious Qur'an says:**

"...take not life, which God hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law: thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom." [Al-Qur'an 6:151] "...if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people." [Al-Qur'an 5:32] The instructions of the Prophet are as follows: "Do not kill any old person, any child or any woman" [1].

"Do not kill the monks in monasteries" or "Do not kill the people who are sitting in places of worship." [2]

During a war, the Prophet saw the corpse of a woman lying on the ground and observed:

"She was not fighting. How then she came to be killed?" Thus non-combatants are guaranteed security of life even if their state is at war with an Islamic state.

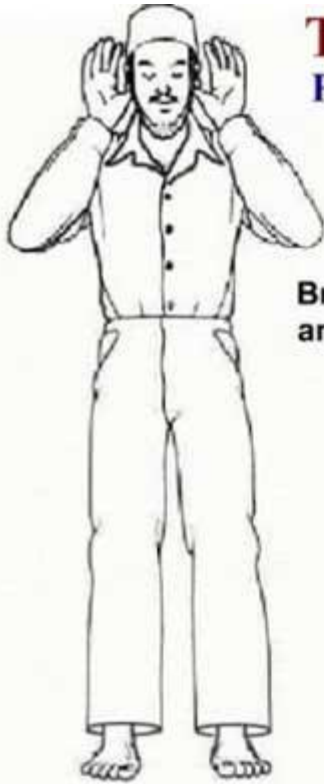
The Glorious Qur'an says:

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And God heareth and knoweth all things." [Al-Qur'an 2:256]

Islam- The Great Unifier

Far from being a militant dogma, Islam is a way of life that transcends race and ethnicity. The Glorious Qur'an repeatedly reminds us of our common origin:

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)." [Al-Qur'an 49:13]



TAKBEERAT

Posture 1

Instructions:

Bring hands, palms open, up to ears,
and place thumbs behind earlobes, and say

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah-o-Akbar

Allah is the Greatest



AL-QAYYAM

Posture 2

Recitation:

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ
وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ
وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

SUBHÁNA-KALLÁH-HUM-MA WA BI-HAMDIKA,
WATABÁRAKAS-MUKA WATA'ÁLÁ JADDUKA,
WA-LÁ ILÁHA GHAÍRUK

O Allah, Glorified, praise-worthy.
and blessed is Thy Name and exalted Thy Majesty.
and there is no deity worthy of worship except thee.



AL-QAYYAM

Recitation:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

A'Ú-DHU-BIL-LÁ-HI MINASHAITÁNIR RAJÍM

I seek refuge in Allah for the rejected Satan

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMILÁHIR RAHMÁNIR RAHÍM

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

After this recite the opening Surah, Al-Fátihah:

Recitation:

ALHAMDU LIL-LÁHI RAB-BIL 'ÁLAMÍN

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds

AR-RAHMÁ-NIR RAHÍM

The Beneficent, the Merciful

MÁLIKI YAU-MID-DÍN

Master of the Day of Judgement

IYYÁ-KA N'ABUDU WA-IYYÁKA NASTA'ÍN

Thee alone we worship and to thee alone we turn for help

IHDI-NAS-SIRÁ-TAL MUSTAQÍM

Guide us in the straight path

SIRÁ TAL-LADHÍNA AN-'AMTA 'ALÁIHIM

The path of those whom You favored

GHAIR-IL MAGHDUBI 'ALÁIHIM

and who did not deserve Thy anger.

WALAD-DÁL-LIN (AMIN)

Or went astray.

Recite any other surah now

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ

وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

Recitation:

Recite this Surah or Any other Surah

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝

لَمْ يَلِدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

QUL HOWALLAHU AHAD. ALLAAHUS-SAMAD

Say: He is God, The One and The Only. God, the Eternal, Absolute;

LAM YALID; WA LAM YOOLAD

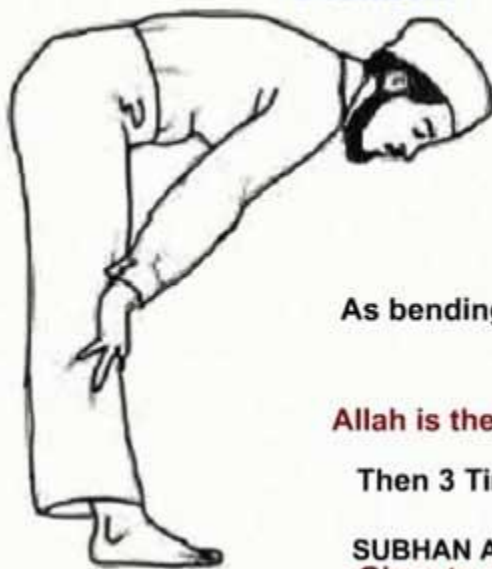
He begetteth not, Nor is He begotten;

WA LAM YAKULLAHOO KUFUWAN AHAD

And there is none Like unto Him.

RUKU

Posture 3



Instructions:

Bend down at waist, placing palms of hands with fingers spread over knees. Back is parallel to ground, such that if a glass of water were on the back, it would not spill. Eyes looking down, directly ahead.

As bending at the waist, recite

Allah is the Greatest

Then 3 Times

SUBHAN A RABBIYAL AZEEM
Glory to my Lord, the reatest

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ
سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ



QAYYAM

Posture 4

Instructions:

While rising from the bending position of Ruku', recite

SAMI 'ALLÁHU LIMAN HAMIDAH
Allah has heard all who praise Him

سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ

RAB-BANÁ LAKAL HAMD
Our Lord: Praise be to Thee
Then return to standing position, arms at side

رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْعَمْدُ

Recitation

ALLÁH AKBAR
Allah is the greatest

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

and move to next position

SAJJDAH

Posture 5



Instructions:

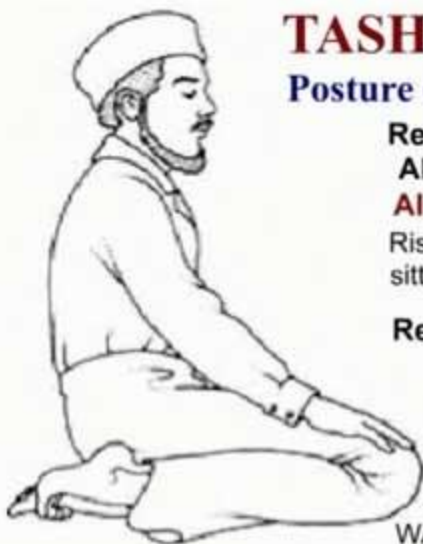
Go down to a kneeling position by placing both hands on knees, lowering oneself slowly and easily onto knees, then touch the head upon the ground so that the following seven body parts are in contact: forehead, two palms, two knees, toes of both feet

Recitation

Recite 3 Times

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى

SUBHÁNA RÁB-BI-YAL A'ALÁ
Glory to my Lord, the most high



TASHAHHUD

Posture 6

Reciting
ALLÁH AKBAR
Allah is the greatest

Rise from the SAJJDAH position, and assume the sitting posture shown to the left.

Recitation

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَارْحَمْنِي وَاهْدِنِي
وَعَافِنِي وَارْفَعْنِي وَاجْبُرْنِي وَارْزُقْنِي

ALLAAHUM MAGH-FIRLEE WARHAM-NEE WAHDI-NEE
WA 'AFI-NEE WARFA'NEE WAJ-BUR-NEE WAR-ZUQ-NEE

Then recite

ALLÁH AKBAR
Allah is the greatest

And then assume SAJJDAH position once more

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

SAJJDAH

Posture 7



Instructions:

Go down to a kneeling position by placing both hands on knees, lowering oneself slowly and easily onto knees, then touch the head upon the ground so that the following seven body parts are in contact: forehead, two palms, two knees, toes of both feet

Recitation

Recite 3 Times

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى

SUBHÁNA RÁB-BI-YAL A'ALÁ
Glory to my Lord, the most high

QUOOD

Posture 8

Instructions:

If the required number of Rakats is but two, the Salat would proceed to the next recitation

Recitation



التَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَوَاتُ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ
وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ
أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

QUOOD

Posture 8

Recitation

AT-TAHI-YÁTU LIL-LÁHI WAS-SALAWÁTU WAT-TAY-YIBÁTU.

All prayers and worship through words, action and sanctity are for Allah only.

AS-SALÁMU 'ALAIKA AY-YUHAN-NABIY-YU.

Peace be on you, O Prophet.

WARAHMATUL-LÁHI WABARAKÁTUH.

And Mercy of Allah and His blessings.

AS-SALÁMU 'ALAINÁ WA'ALÁ 'IBÁDIL-LÁHIS-SÁLIHÍN.

Peace be on us and on those who are righteous servants of Allah.

ASH-HADU AL-LÁ ILÁHA IL-LAL-LAHÚ.

I bear witness to the fact that there is no deity but Allah.

WA-ASH-HADU AN-NA MUHAMMADAN 'ABDUHU WARASÚLUH

I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger

Instructions:

In the three raka'át (i.e. Maghrib) or four raka'át (Like Zuhr, 'Asr and 'Ishá) Saláh you stand up for the remaining raka'át after Tashahhud. On the other hand if it is two raka'át (Fajr) Saláh, keep sitting and after this recite Darud (blessing for the Prophet) in these words:



QUOOD

Posture 8

Recitation



اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ ط

AL-LÁHUM-MA SAL-LI 'ALÁ MUHAMMAD-IW WA 'ALÁ ÁLI MUHAMMADIN

O Alláh, exalt Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad

KAMÁ SAL-LAITA 'ALÁ IBRÁHÍMA WA'ALÁ ÁLI IBRÁHÍMA

As thou did exalt Ibrahim and his followers

IN-NAKA HAMÍDUM-MAJEED

Thou art the praised, the Glorious

QUOOD

Posture 8

Recitation



اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ
وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ ط

AL-LÁHUM-MA BÁRIK 'ALÁ MUHAMMAD-IW

O Alláh, bless Muhammad

WA 'ALÁ ÁLI MUHAMMADIN

and his followers

KAMÁBÁRAKTA 'ALÁ IBRÁHÍMA WA 'ALÁ ÁLI IBRÁHÍMA

as Thou has blest Ibrahim and his followers

IN-NAKA HAMÍDUM-MAJEED

Thou art the Praised, The Glorious

QUOOD

Posture 8

Recitation



رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي
رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءَ ۝ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ
لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ ۝

O Lord! Make me one who establishes regular Prayer,
and also (raise such) among my offspring
O our Lord! and accept thou my Prayer
O Lord! cover (us) with Thy forgiveness - me, my parents and all believers,
on they Day that the Reckoning will be established

Posture 9



Instructions:

Now turn your face to the right saying

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ ط

AS-SALÁMU 'ALAIKUM WA-RAHMATUL-LÁH

Peace be on you and Allah's blessings.

Now turn your face to the left saying

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ ط

AS-SALÁMU 'ALAIKUM WA-RAHMATUL-LÁH

Peace be on you and Allah's blessings.

